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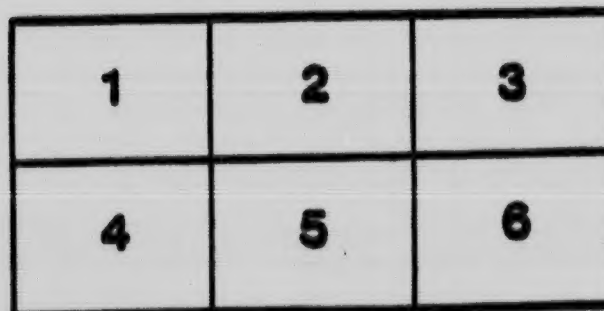
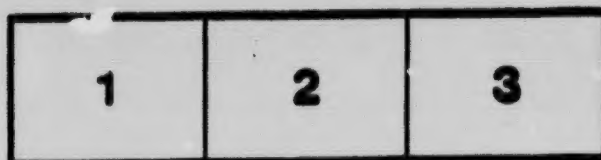
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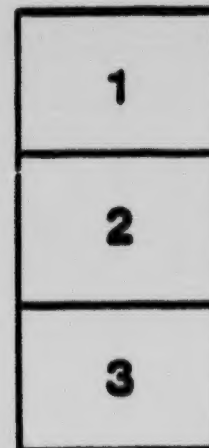
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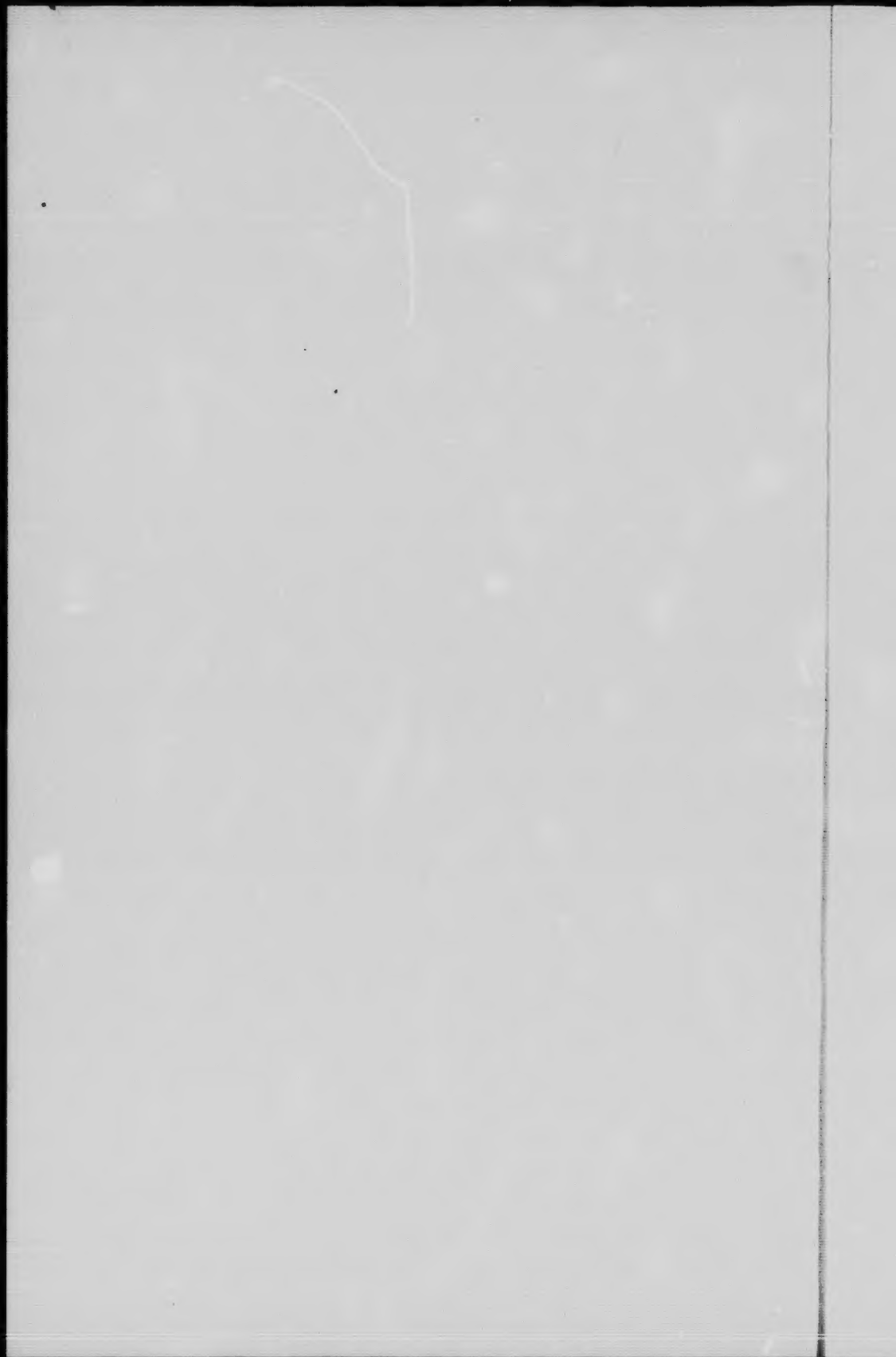
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THE HOUSE ON THE CLIFF.

The House on the Cliff

BY
CHARLES SPARROW



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THE HOUSE ON THE CLIFF.

CHAPTER I.

THE sun was setting at the close of a bright summer's day. Rarely had it looked upon a more beautiful or inspiring scene than it beheld in the neighborhood of the little seaboard town of Cliffgate. Away to the horizon spread the North Sea, its rolling waves crimsoned in the sunset. On one side a long, dark promontory of rugged rocks, stretching out to deep water. The tide had turned, and between it and the grey cliffs lay a golden bed of sand, studded with pools that glittered in the dying sunlight with a crimson like blood. A flock of sea-gulls, as if scared by some unseen person, left the cliffs with loud cries and darted seaward. The sounds echoed and re-echoed in and out of the rugged caves. Farther north lay piles of rocks and huge pebbles, intermixed with seaweed and numerous shells.

A house, half-hidden behind an enormous

6 THE HOUSE ON THE CLIFF.

rock, stood upon the farthest point of the headland. At first sight it appeared to be a part of the cliff, but as you drew nearer, the rock you first thought it to be turned out to be a building, evidently of man's handiwork, and solidly erected of stone. It was indeed placed upon a romantic site. Below, at high tide, you could see the dark waters and hear their roar, as with ceaseless motion they beat against the cliff. Above, in the long nights of winter, the wind would whistle and moan. In front lay the wide ocean. To the north stretched for miles the rocky cliff. A mile to the south could be seen a sandy beach where lay the town, sheltered from the cruel north winds by the headland. There the former dwellers in the grey house on the cliff had found their nearest neighbors.

If you spoke to an old inhabitant about the place he would probably have told you that the Lighthouse Commissioners once intended to erect a lighthouse on the spot now occupied by the house on the cliff. After the foundation had been built, however, it was abandoned for a more suitable spot, where one now stands, two miles farther south. But this was close on a century ago. A fisherman, they say, many years after took advantage of the work that had been done, and having secured the help of some of his comrades, managed, after months of labor, to

THE HOUSE ON THE CLIFF.

build there a fairly decent dwelling. But the adventurous fisherman died, and for years the house was vacant, and ultimately fell into decay. The foundation work, which had been done under government supervision, was, however, excellent. It had attracted the notice of Captain Price, the short, strongly-built, broad-shouldered seaman who, on the evening on which our story opens, had climbed the winding road that led to the "old lighthouse." He was in his early and vigorous prime, but it could not be said that he was handsome. His features betokened strength of character, but they were not cast in classic mould. His face was redeemed from commonplace, however, by the look of alert intelligence and comprehending sympathy that occasionally flashed from his fine blue eyes.

Perhaps the homeliness of the worthy captain's face was emphasized on this occasion by contrast with that of a very beautiful girl of about twenty summers who was standing near him.

Together they looked out over the sea from the green plateau at the top of the cliff, in the midst of which the old house stood. Here an attempt at a garden had been made, and a few gnarled old fruit-trees, of picturesque appearance, told of the horticulture of a bygone day. By the side of the half-ruined house stood a

8 THE HOUSE ON THE CLIFF.

couple of Scotch firs, completing what would have delighted the eye of many an artist.

"I like this place," said Captain Price, as he followed his fair companion through the broken-down gate of the old garden.

"I think it is quite romantic," replied she; "I should love to live up here."

"Would you really, Miss Weldon?"

"Yes," she answered; "up here one seems to be lifted above all the small worries and tittle-tattle of Cliffgate. You know, Mr. Price, this is one of my old haunts. I can remember coming here with my companions ever so many years ago. Then when uncle sent me away to boarding-school this was always one of the places I had to see when I came home for the holidays."

"And that is quite a long time ago," said Captain Price.

"Oh, yes; I'm getting awfully old now," she said, with a simulated despair that was charming.

"No; it is I who am getting old—that's the worst of it," responded the captain with a sigh.

"Don't talk such nonsense, Mr. Price. Why, it will be years and years before you are as old as uncle, and he isn't *very* old. But what made you say that it was a long time since I came home from boarding-school?"

"Well, Miss Weldon, it was in this way. A seaman reckons time by his voyages. The first time I saw you was three voyages ago—do you remember I called to see my old friend, your uncle?"

"Yes, and I remember you said one of my drawings was wrong. It was a ship, and you said I had not got the rigging right, and I didn't like you at all for saying so."

"I'm very sorry, I'm sure," said the captain.

"Oh, that's all right! When I came to think about it, of course, I felt what a little fool I'd been to be annoyed."

"You didn't show any annoyance. In fact, I could not help feeling what a sensible person you were. And I expected to see you when I was home from my next voyage, and didn't; nor the next time either. And when at last I *did* see you, you had grown quite a woman."

"To think of your remembering me like that! I'm sure I'm quite honored!" said Violet, as she dropped a pretty curtsey and looked straight into the captain's eyes.

She saw an expression there that at once arrested her mood of merriment.

"Why, what in the world are you looking like that for, Mr. Price? You are pulling a face as long as a fiddle. Is there anything the matter?"

"Miss Weldon, I'm a lonely man. Sometimes it comes over me, but there's no call for me to give way to it when *you* are about; for if there's anything that should drive such thoughts away, it's your bonnie face."

"Now, Mr. Price!" said Violet, holding up her finger.

"I'm not flattering you, Miss Weldon," he said, seriously; "far from it. I don't *think* I'm that sort of man."

"No, I'm sure you're not," said Violet, warmly.

"And more than that, there's no call for me to intrude my sad memories on your fresh young life."

"I'm sure you will always have my sympathy. I suppose you think of these things more when you are on your long voyages; I'm sure I should. And you lost your wife, didn't you—why, it must be ten years ago, for I remember the funeral, and it was just after my tenth birthday, and now I'm twenty. How is your little boy?"

"Oh, I suppose he's all right. I've got him at the best school I know of. He's a rare little chap."

"He's a dear," said Violet.

"Do you really think so, Miss Weldon? That's very nice for a father to hear."

"I've often thought about him, and your having to leave him to go on those long voyages."

"Yes, it's too bad. And then he's never known a mother's love."

"Nor have I," said Violet. "I don't remember my mother. I've never known anybody as a mother but Auntie Jones."

"She is not really your aunt?"

"No, but I've always called her so. Poor old Auntie! I'm afraid I've led her a pretty dance sometimes, but she's a faithful old thing."

"She ought to be glad that you think so well of her," said the captain.

"Why, Mr. Price, she's brought me up! Where should I have been if she hadn't been a mother to me ever since I was the very least baby? Why, I should have died of measles or whooping cough or something. But, Mr. Price, couldn't Carl come and spend the rest of his holidays at our house? I'm sure uncle wouldn't object, and I should be simply delighted."

"That's very kind of you, Miss Weldon," said the captain, heartily, putting out his hand impulsively as the tears came into his eyes.

"Will you leave it to me to arrange it, then?"

"Why, certainly, Miss Weldon."

"Why do you call me 'Miss Weldon,' Captain Price? You used to call me 'Violet.'"

"But that was long ago. Now you are a grown-up lady. Don't you know that sailors are timid where the fair sex is concerned?"

"It's news to me if they are. But surely, Captain Price, you are not afraid of me?"

Again she looked straight into his eyes. They were fine eyes. And the captain was not the man to have a pretty girl looking at him as Violet looked at him now without feeling his heart beat faster. And summoning up all his courage as a seaman knows how to do, he there and then, in a manly, straightforward way, told Violet Weldon that he had loved her for years, and that he wanted her for his wife.

Whereupon Violet first went as white as a sheet, and then blushed as red as fire, and said, "Oh, Mr. Price, do you really?" Then he, emboldened, took her in his arms and kissed her. And as they came down from the old lighthouse the captain told her that he meant to buy the place, and to build a good solid house there for her. But this was after they had indulged in much talk of an altogether different kind—the sweet nothings of love's confession. It was astonishing how much help Captain Price thought it necessary to give to Violet on her descent down the rocky path. When they reached the lower level he had his arm around her waist. A tall and handsome young seaman,

THE HOUSE ON THE CLIFF. 13

of whom we shall hear more in this story, happened to be strolling not far off when the lovers emerged on the sandy beach. They did not see him, but he saw and recognized them, and his face grew dark with jealous anger.

CHAPTER II.

"I 'EAR as how they're a-goin' to build a 'ouse at th' owd light'us," said Zack Peters to his crony, Bob Sowerby, as for the twentieth time that morning he swept the horizon with his telescope. This time he brought it to bear on a collier steaming southwards with coal for London. "Why, theer's th' *Lily Jane*," he continued.

"Th' *Lily Jane*? Not theer. Not th' *Lily Jane's* day."

"Well, tak' th' glass yersen and see if it aint," said the first speaker, handing his battered old telescope to his companion.

Bob adjusted it to his sight and said, "Well, I'm blowed; tha's reight."

"I've got eyes i' my head and I've got ears," said Zack, sententiously. "What I sees I knaws, an' what I 'ears I sticks to. What 'd th' judge say to me, eh? Just as a matter o' speaking. Bob, what 'd he say to me?"

"Oh, that's all reight; I warnt throwin' no doubts on yeh."

"Well, its years gone by, but it remains good. 'Mr. Peters,' says the judge—which you

know, Bob, he had his wig on, and sot in his scarlet robes."

"Sartainly I do, Zack, and it's twenty years ago come Michaelmas."

"He says," continued Zack, taking no notice of his companion's interpolation, "'Mr. Peters,' he says, 'you're a witness as does credit to the law and to the country.'" And the speaker straightened himself on the rough plank seat on which both were sitting, and shutting up his telescope rested one end of it on his knee, slanting it out over the sea as if it were a sort of thick sceptre.

Bob Sowerby said nothing for several minutes. When you are sitting on the seashore, on a morning which is half cloud and half sunshine, and which is comfortably warm; when, moreover, you are seventy-five years old, and have a pipe to fill, and light, and smoke, it is not necessary to speak every few minutes.

The sea-front of Cliffgate, the little fishing town in the neighborhood of which their lives had been spent, basked behind them in the diffused sunshine, its paved street at a little higher level than they occupied at the end of the Quay, from which the sea had retired, leaving a long stretch of sand.

"So you heerd as they was a-goin' to build a 'ouse at th' owd light'us?"

"Who is?" queried Bob, when he had got his pipe going.

"Who *could* it be? There's two folks i' this town as *might* do it."

"You nach'lly refers to owd Weldon and Cap'n Price?"

"Sartinly I do."

"Which on 'em?"

"Well, you don't suppose owd Weldon, as owns them smacks and schooners out there, wants another 'ouse besides th' one he's gotten, which is th' best i' th' town?"

"It's Cap'n Price, eh? Well, he's a warm man. They say he gets thirty pund's a month fro' 'is owner, besides what he mak's o' th' side. Tradin' to South Americky's a good lay. But what's *he* want a 'ouse for—a single man like 'im? *He's* not one for th' women-folk. He aint a-going to marry Missis Jones? Why, she's twenty year older than 'im."

"Missis Jones!" said Zack, contemptuously. "There's no love lost atween 'im and Missis Jones. How abart Vi'let Weldon? An' then you forget th' cap'n is a widderer. He lost 'is wife afore he came here ten year ago. I 'ear he's gotten a son twelve year owd at school somewheres."

"Well, Vi'let's as much too young as Missis Jones is too owd. Th' cap'n must be forty if

he's a day. Vi'let's twenty-one come next Wissuntide."

"Which is six weeks from to-day."

"And, then, how about Mr. Donovan? I thought he wa' sweet on her."

"Donovan's a fine young feller," said Zack, "but when gels is consarned you can't say what they'll do. Gels has their fancies and their ways—you can't make 'em, nor nobody else."

"Talk o' th' devil and he's sure to appear," said Bob, as a well-built young man at that moment sauntered into view on their right, walking seawards—a small fox terrier at his heels. He nodded to the old boatmen as he passed down the gradually sloping declivity to where the incoming tide was sending its silvery ripples up on to the sand.

Donovan moved with easy grace, swinging a light cane. Although he was scarcely six feet tall, he was exceedingly well-proportioned, and his ruddy brown complexion, set off with fair, almost golden hair, told of a seafaring life, while his keen eyes and expanding nostrils, combined with a certain stubborn expression of chin and mouth, gave warning of a disposition it would not be well to cross.

Arrived at the water, he evidently wanted his dog to go into it. But fox terriers do not always care for the sea. Dash evidently thought

walking on the sand plenty good enough for him, as a marine experience. Again and again his master threw sticks into the sea for him to fetch out, and again and again the dog declined to view those missiles in exactly that light. Then Donovan became angry and gave him a severe cut or two with his cane, at which the dog yelped, but was not any more disposed to become a darer of the billow. Finally, his master took him by the hind legs and, swinging him around, flung him far out into the water, repeating the process twice as soon as he came back to land. This done, and followed by a half-drowned and thoroughly frightened little quadruped, he sullenly, and with an unpleasant look on his face, walked up the sand towards the town.

"That aint no way to treat a dog," said Bob.

"It do seem a bit masterful," replied old Zack. "If he wor to try that there way with Vi'let Weldon, I reckon she'd kick over th' traces—a gel o' spirit, that."

"So it's Cap'n Price as is a-goin' to build th' house you was talkin' about?"

"Yes; got one o' them h'architect fellers fro' Scarboro, and Westmans, the contractors, at Rentway, are a-goin' to do th' work," said Zack.

"Reckon it'll beat owd Weldon's?"

"Well, you see, Bob, there's town 'ouses and

country 'ouses, and there's them as is betwixt and atween—but this 'ere one that th' cap'n's a-goin' to build is a different one altogether. Course, what he likes about it is th' sea view, and I suppose he thinks he and 'is missis'll be to theirsens. Some folks *are* like that—they'd rather ha' yer room than yer comp'ny. When they're that way, I says, why let 'em be; I noan want to force my comp'ny on 'em. Mighty starchy though, *I* think it. There's many a man as is freer spoken than Cap'n Price."

"You're a kind o' makin' sure he's going to get spliced?—you say 'he and 'is missus.'"

"Well, what sud he want to build th' 'ouse for if he wa'nt a-goin' to set up 'ousekeepin'? And how could he set up 'ousekeepin' wi'out a missis? Course, he might be a-goin' to get one fro' Scarboro or somewheres, or he might bring one 'ome fro' South Ameriky."

"A nigger gel, eh? Well, we s'all see what we s'all see," said Bob, knocking out the ashes from his pipe and preparing to go home for dinner. His example being followed by his crony, the two old mariners were soon moving towards their respective cottages. Coming to a point where their ways divided, Bob said: "Talking about Donovan, I suppose you've 'eard he's signed on the *Erith* for her next v'yge as first mate?"

"On th' *Erith*? On Cap'n Price's ship? Wot are givin' me, Robert Sowerby? Why, man, they's at daggers drawn. Aint I told you they be both sweet on th' same gel?"

"Now, Zack Peters, don't get on yer 'igh 'oss. I thought, of course, you knew. Anyhow, it's reight; and Donovan's first mate on th' *Erith*. P'raps Cap'n Price don't want Donovan hangin' round Vi'let Weldon when he's away, eh, Zack?"

And Bob went to his codfish and onions with zest. At any rate, Zack Peters didn't know everything, though he *had* been complimented by a judge.

CHAPTER III.

AN interval of years has elapsed since the events recorded in the last chapter. The solid house that Captain Price determined upon has been built, and the worthy captain has taken home his bride and her old retainer, Mrs. Jones.

The darkness had fallen around, but ere long the moon, now at its full, rose and cast its silvery light across the land and sea. The tide had all but reached its receding limit, and was faintly murmuring. A slight breeze filled the quiet air, gently stirring the silvery pools on the sandy beach into little wavelets. Far in the distance shone the lighthouse, its brilliant light ever revolving. A few ships lay snugly moored in the bay, sheltered by the headland. On board one of them, a three-master, there was a scene of bustling activity. She was under orders to sail in the early morning. The watch were bending sails and rigging her up for the long voyage she had before her. As usual on the eve of a voyage, the tars that manned her seemed a little sorry to leave port once again for the high seas. The captain was not aboard. Yet

he was not carousing at the hotel in Cliffgate, as the crew thought—perhaps envying him. He was in his house on the headland.

Under the dark shadows of the cliff a man was uneasily pacing to and fro. Now and again he would stand and gaze anxiously at the house far above him. A little to the right of him a narrow pathway, cut out of the rocky cliff, wound its way up the rough ascent. Seeing nothing, he would resume his uneasy pacing to and fro. A boat, anchored a short distance away, drifted with the rising tide, as far as the rope would allow it to. The man would utter a low curse and make his way down to the sea to remove the anchor farther up the beach.

"The captain should have been here before now," he muttered impatiently, glancing at his watch. "He said he would be aboard before midnight, and now it is near one o'clock. She's due to sail in a few hours, d—n it," he muttered, glancing towards the ship's light hanging from the bows. "It can scarce be the grog that keeps him; he likes a little, but he's too darned careful."

A sudden change came to his face. He gave a deep sigh. "Of course, he has his wife to think about now," he muttered. "How I loved her! I wonder if she is satisfied with her choice." His brow darkened. He clenched his

teeth tight, as if going through some great mental agony. Then he stole dejectedly away towards the boat.

One of the windows of the house far above him was thrown open, and as he lay in the boat he could hear talking and laughter from inside which made him feel the more wretched. A great hatred for the captain had grown in him ever since he had lost his sweetheart. That "all is fair in love and war" did not enter his head.

In the house above, the dining-room was brightly illumined with candles in silver stands. A fire was burning brightly in a large open grate, above which was a wide mantelpiece, prettily decorated with tapestry. In the middle stood a marble clock, on either side were numerous photographs in artistic frames. Upon the walls hung pictures—shipwreck scenes, moon and sunlight effects on the sea, the storms and the stillness of the deep. It was a display of art to please a seaman's soul. The table bore a feast that was sumptuous enough. Wines of old vintage, such as captains know how to obtain, were on the side-board, and there was a sparkling array of cut glass. If the baleful Donovan could have looked in he would have seen that Captain Price looked around him with an eye of contentment.

After supper the captain lit a cigar and

seated himself in one of the armchairs by the fireside. His wife was at the piano and almost unconsciously touched the keys. The sweet sounds that followed showed that she was a born musician. Her face was lit up with a tender light. The faithful but fussy Mrs. Jones presently ceased clearing away the dishes and stood looking at her. Mrs. Jones sighed. She thought, very officiously, what a great mistake Violet's marriage had been. She had the assurance to imagine that Violet had already felt it so. She was mistaken, of course. The captain noticed her gesture with amusement. He had learned to appraise the old woman at her true value, and put up with her for his wife's sake.

Suddenly the music ceased. Glancing towards his wife, the captain rose and sat down by the piano.

"Violet," he said, "play me another tune; I do so love to hear you."

"Really!" she answered; "I thought you did not care for it, Fred. Do you remember you advised me not to bring my piano with me?" There was a roguish twinkle in her eyes.

"Ah! that was because I didn't know enough. The music of the wind and waves are supposed to be enough for a sailor." His eyes shone with a sudden light. "Besides, your playing has taught me."

"Now, Fred," she said, "don't flatter me. What shall it be?" she asked, turning over the leaves of her music book.

Mrs. Jones felt herself entitled to stand, as she swept the crumbs from the tablecloth, glancing from one to the other. Presently her eyes caught the face of the clock. It was growing late.

"Your favorite, Vi," the captain answered quickly.

Violet dashed into the piece with vigor. Then the music ceased, and there was silence for awhile.

"Pardon, Captain," interjected the housekeeper, who was still manipulating the cloth, "isn't your ship due to sail in an hour?"

She glanced out of the window. The moon's reflection had lit up the water, and she saw the little boat with the first mate, Donovan, patiently waiting.

"Mrs. Jones, you are far better than a clock. In fact, you ought to be put up in the church tower to see that the clock does its duty properly," said the captain, jocularly. "But thank you, madam," he continued, "you are worth your weight in gold."

"Violet," he said, turning to his wife, "I forgot. I must be going, love." He held her hands in his.

"Oh, dear! it is always like this; when will you be coming back again? I hope it won't be a long voyage, Fred!" said Violet.

"A few months only, dearest. Good-bye for the present." He took her in his arms, kissing her again and again. Then he crept upstairs and looked at the face of his sleeping boy Carl, and pressed a kiss on his brow. He came back for a last farewell, and then the door closed behind him, and Violet felt that once more her husband had gone to entrust himself to the sea on which his life had been passed.

A sigh escaped from her lips. Then she went upstairs to look out upon the sea. Carl awoke, and she heard him calling. She went to him and sat by him, fondly stroking his curly hair.

"Mother, don't cry; daddy was in a hurry." He twined his arms around his stepmother's neck and kissed her.

CHAPTER IV.

As the captain opened the door and stepped out he was surprised to see that the night had all but spent itself, and the world was awakening with myriads of golden streaks across the eastern sky. The tide was near its full, and the waves were beating monotonously against the cliff.

He hurried down the headland's rocky pathway towards a sandy cove, where he saw the boat and the mate awaiting him. His eyes rested on the ship, which was rolling with the sway of the waves, for there was a heavy swell out in the open sea. He heard the men singing a chant; they were hoisting up the top-gallant-yard.

He immediately increased his pace almost to a run, and would have come down the cliff quicker than he had intended to, if he luckily had not stopped his fall by grasping a branch of a solitary bush that grew between two boulders. The branch was a frail one, but it checked his fall. Regaining his balance, he proceeded more carefully for the rest of the way.

"Fortunately that bush was close at hand," he ejaculated to himself, "else that would have been the end of me. I must take care, for I am a married man." Then, thought running quickly, he pictured himself lying at the bottom of the cliff with a broken neck. "Ah! but the Cap has many lives," he chuckled. "I don't believe that the old cat that Violet is so fond of would mind. Then there's Donovan. He's not a bad chap, but he certainly wouldn't. He might think he could step into my shoes. Good for Donovan."

With these thoughts running through his mind he safely reached the bottom, and walked sharply along the sandy cove towards the boat. At the bottom of the boat Donovan was lying, and by the snores that repeatedly escaped from his open mouth it was plain that he was lost in sleep, and no doubt dreaming of lost opportunities. But he was soon awakened with a start by the captain as he leaped aboard.

"Come, come, come, Donovan; wake up, man," said the captain; "it's time I was aboard."

"D—— it, yes, hours ago," said Donovan, sulkily.

"Shove her off, then, and none of your impudence," growled the captain.

"Well, you have kept me waiting here for hours, Captain Price."

"Silence!" roared the captain, with eyes aflame with anger. "Another word and I'll put you over the side, you insolent dog!"

Donovan's face turned livid white. Then his glance fell. "Course you're the boss," he answered. He shoved the boat away from the shore. Hoisting up the sail they glided away with the breeze towards the ship.

Before she went to bed the old housekeeper might have been seen peering down the cliff. The sun, a golden ball, rose as she turned to go indoors. The air was suddenly filled with the music of bird life. The lark soared up, up into the blue space above.

Before entering the house Mrs. Jones turned to take a last look at the ship. The ocean was brilliant with gold and red from the gorgeous sky. She held her hands above her eyes to obtain a clearer view, for the light was dazzling. The boat had come alongside the vessel and was being hoisted up. She heard faint voices echoing across the water. As the sails were being bent she imagined she heard the first mate's voice ordering "Set sail."

Her mind wandered back to the past. It was at a dance given by the captain when she first met the man. The captain then rented a moderately good house in Cliffgate. To celebrate his boy's birthday (his wife having been dead sev-

eral years then) he gave a dance. It was a great surprise to the townspeople, for he was a man of retired habits. Included amongst the many guests was Violet. Mrs. Jones, in black silk, was her chaperone. Donovan was also a guest. It was at that time that Mrs. Jones was on the lookout to find Violet a suitable husband. With the match-making propensities of old women in her situation, she wanted to find a suitable partner for her young mistress. It need not be supposed that she did not think of her own future. She took a great liking to Donovan, and thought how nice it would be to be housekeeper to such a young couple as he and Violet. He had a pleasing disposition and was exceedingly handsome. How could she do better than to get Violet to marry him? But the irrepresible old lady did not know that there was another man already deeply in love with her, who really had a far better chance than Donovan to marry her. This, of course, was Captain Price, for the captain was an old friend of Violet's uncle, with whom she had lived the greater part of her life. There had been a tacit understanding between the uncle and the captain that "if things were O.K.," the latter should be betrothed to Violet "if she felt that way inclined," as the uncle said. Violet had a secret liking for the captain, and in time it grew to

love, as we have already seen. The only opposition she had to encounter was from her old nurse, and it was no little one either. The redoubtable Mrs. Jones strongly objected to such a union. Donovan was the ideal man in her mind's eye to become her child's husband. Donovan doted on Violet. He was "head over heels" in love with her. So for a time the two-sided courtship had been carried on, which ended eventually, greatly to the disgust of Violet's old chaperone, in the triumph of Captain Price.

"Dear me!" she said to herself, when at last the banns of marriage were read out in the parish church by the vicar one Sunday morning, "Dear me! Whatever possesses the dear to take such a disastrous step? What in the world can she find in such a man to choose for her husband? It's a pity; a great pity. He's not attractive, he's decidedly ugly; not sociably inclined either. Oh, Vi! Oh, Vi! to prefer this man to Donovan is outrageous." Then she actually tried to scheme out a plan to stop the fatal ceremony before it was too late. But saner thoughts prevailed. "Perhaps I have misjudged the man. And is it not Violet's wish?" she mused. "Yes, it is poor Violet's wish; I will not intrude," was the conclusion she came to.

It was a day not to be forgotten for loveli-

32 THE HOUSE ON THE CLIFF.

ness when the nuptial knot was tied, such a day as one can look back upon with delight. It was as if old England's clime had purposely donned her brightest, her balmiest weather for that occasion. Those who have lived at the seaside and have seen the sun rise across the sea in a perfect sky and felt the cooling breeze and the gentle spray from the little waves as they dash against the shore, will have an idea of the day on which the nuptials were celebrated. Funting and flags in pretty array were flying from the masts of the fishing-boats. Every sailor tried to make his boat look the most attractive. It was a great day for the fisher-folks. The church was crowded to its full capacity. The ceremony went off well. If there were two disappointed people amongst the congregation they were Donovan and the middle-aged Mrs. Jones.

CHAPTER V.

THE little town, or seaport, as it was commonly called, lay a little over a mile south of Cliff House, snugly sheltered from the north and south wind by rugged cliffs stretching seaward. The bay offered fine shelter for ships. It was a great fishing centre. The tons of fish that were brought in daily by the yawls and fishing smacks were shipped to the principal English markets. In its little way it was a busy town. The business part of the town, where the shops lay, was quite ambitious. Occasionally large outward-bounders would put into the port for ballast, which always caused great stir and excitement. The townspeople, fishermen, and crowds of women and children, would swarm along the shore as soon as the rumor got afloat that an ocean-bound vessel was making for the bay, all eager to get the first glimpse of her. The "Sailors' Inn," a small building situated on the cliff facing the sea, the night after the crew landed, would be a scene of great festivity. Sailors are generally a wild set of people when let loose after a long voyage, and they gener-

34 THE HOUSE ON THE CLIFF.

ally have the knack of making things lively when ashore.

The fisher-folks dwelt in small cottages. There was one you would notice larger than the rest, built of stone, and cleaner kept. I do not mean to say that the fishermen's wives were an untidy set of people; no, far from that; but the appearance of this house betokened wealthier occupants. It was the house of Violet's uncle, where she had spent so many pleasant years. He, too, was a fisherman, but of the wealthier kind. He owned a dozen fishing smacks, and the fish brought him in a considerable revenue. A short, broad-shouldered man, wearing a long beard, he was by appearance a regular north country fisherman. He formerly sailed one of the smacks himself, but in later years he took life easier—the boats being all commanded by hired sailors.

A great gathering of fishermen had congregated along the shore to see the three-master leave her moorings. A fair wind was blowing for the outward-bounders. It was a pretty sight to see the ship in full sail speeding on her way. The wind was aft, and all her sails were well filled out.

"She's a clipping boat, mates," said one of the fishermen, as he handed his telescope, which he had been looking through, to his nearest com-

rade. "Aye, a great goer. It won't take her many days before the North Sea and English Channel is left knots behind."

"Bound for Philadelphia, boss, is she not?" he asked, turning towards the latest arrival. The man to whom he spoke was no other than Violet's uncle.

"Aye, aye, Bill. She has a long voyage in front of her, but if anyone can get her there in good time, that's Fred."

"You are right, sir. He's a good cap'n, is Fred. Make six of Donovan, eh? To tell ye the truth I never thought much of his first mate. He ain't the true type o' seadog."

"Well, to tell you my mind, take it as you may, Bob, that Donovan is a scoundrel," said old Weldon.

At these ugly words Bob screwed up his half-closed eyes and looked in utter amazement.

"Yes, Bob, a scoundrel," said the old man again as he turned away.

Bob shook his head vigorously. "Maybe he is," he thought. "Boss knows better than me. He's a downright clever man is boss. Well, it's a caution. I'd hardly believe he's a scoundrel, though."

"Come, mates," yelled a harsh voice from a knot of men who were busy mending their nets, "time we launched out some of the boats and

36 THE HOUSE ON THE CLIFF.

set sail for the headland. Fish is scarce these days; gents could be a-doing with some for breakfast," he grinned.

"Ha, ha, ha!" hoarsely laughed a dozen or so of them, folding up their nets they had mended and pitching them into the boats.

"Yeo heave, yeo heave," immediately sang out a number of voices, while they pushed their boats down the shore into the sea.

The tide was on the turn. One after the other the boats were launched. Immediately they hoisted up the sails and, with the wind after, the little vessels bounded across the sparkling water.

The boss had given a hand to launch them. When the last one had shot into the water he turned and went homeward.

CHAPTER VI.

BREAKFAST over, Captain Weldon made up his mind to take a walk to Cliff House. The tide being about half-way out, he took the shore instead of along the top of the cliff. Thousands of sea-gulls, startled by his appearance, dashed with a cry out of the cliff. The air seemed alive with them as they whirled in and out on high.

The old man took little heed of them, though. Cormorants, kettiwigs, herring-gulls, and rock-pigeons did not appear to surprise him. He had lived all his life either on the sea or by the shore, so it seemed a matter of course to him to see such a tribe of sea-birds.

The pools of water that the tide had left in the hollows of the sand sparkled in the sunlight as they rippled with the breeze like silver. The air had a delicious smell of seaweed. Flocks of sand-pipers rose up before him with shrill cries, only to settle down about a hundred yards farther away. Across the water, abreast of the mighty headland, could be seen the long line of fishing smacks. They were busy with the fishing. Presently he reached the path that wound

up the cliff to the house. Climbing up it he was met at the top by the housekeeper, who had gone out of doors to bring in some coal. "Good morning, Mrs. Jones," he greeted her with. "How is your mistress to-day?"

"Not very well, sir; a little upset. But come in, sir, she will be pleased to see you."

"And Carl? Oh, there is Carl," he exclaimed, as the boy came bounding towards him.

"Come in, uncle. Mother heard you talking and sent me to bring you in quick."

"That I will, that I will, my boy. Did you see your daddy's ship set sail? It's rare to be him—to be a master of such a dandy clipper. How I wish I was young again, to be a-roaming on the bounding main! There's not a better life, my boy. Oh, what a future you have in front of you; such a future!"

The boy's eyes sparkled with delight.

"Dear uncle," he said, "some day I will be a captain."

"That you will; that you will. Admiral, perhaps, who knows!"

"Well, Violet," he said, with outstretched hand as they entered the room. "I expect you feel a little lonesome now that the captain has gone. I told him the other day that he would have to take his wife with him the next voyage."

A smile lit up her pale face.

"A captain's wife is born to endure, uncle."

"No, no, dear. They can take them with them," he said kindly. "I will see that you go the next voyage."

"Supposing that I am a bad sailor, uncle?"

"Pooh, bosh. All Weldons are good sailors, I am proud to say." The old man's face beamed with pride.

Presently he turned and looked out of the window. "See, Violet," he said quickly, "the boats are returning. I hope they have had a good haul. There's a scarcity of fish on the market; we've only had poor catches lately."

"Keep the sails full, my boys!" cried the old salt, as if they could hear him. "Great guns, they are going," he continued. "*Katie's* ahead, Violet, see! She's the fastest boat in the fleet."

"Hurrah!" shouted Carl. "She's my favorite boat."

CHAPTER VII.

THE tide was again on the turn when the captain left the Prices for home. But the wind had veered around to the north-east and was blowing freshly. The waves were growing larger, rushing headlong over each other along the sand, throwing foam into the air, which was carried far up the shore by the breeze.

"It's going to be a wild night, I fear," muttered the old seaman. "It's a blessing the boats have returned." He pulled his sailor's hat farther over his brow, and buttoned his pea-jacket closer to him. "A deuce of a night, by gad!" he muttered.

On high the "kettiwigs" swarmed, darting madly in and out of the angry sea. Farther ahead of him followed a number of sea-swallows struggling hard against the fierce wind, which every minute appeared to get wilder. The return of the tide had brought this sudden change, which was not at all unusual on this north-east coast of England.

He hurried along the rocky beach as fast as he could. It was no easy matter, though, with

the wind dead in his face, to cover the ground fast. The tide along the headland never left the cliff far, so, on its return, it did not take long to find its way, dashing up the rocks long before the sandy beach was covered.

He saw the fishermen hastening to and fro as they hauled in, one after the other, the fishing smacks and rowing boats up the beach above the level tide-mark. Some were busy attending to their nets. A smile of contentment shone on their faces as he approached them.

"By gad, boss, we have had a great haul."

The old sailor's eyes sparkled.

"Yes, sir, we'll flood the market to-day."

"Aye! it's a knockout, mates. Well, well, we needed it. There would have been many a long face if it weren't so. Wouldn't there, mates?" he laughed.

"True, boss," said Tom, the stoutest amongst them. "My missis only said to me this morning, 'Tom,' she said, 'if ye get no luck to-day the Lord knows we'll starve.' Sure, too, we have not a bite in the house."

"Come, mates, we must have all the boats snug. There's going to be a hurricane to-night, else my name's not Bill."

"Ye are right. Haul 'em up, mates. It's a high tide and a wild one," said Captain Weldon.

All hands immediately rushed to the boats,

42 THE HOUSE ON THE CLIFF.

and with a shout they moved them one by one up the beach.

A band of women were standing watching near by. Some were their wives and some their daughters. Their heads were bare, and the wind had loosened their hair, which was blowing in all directions about their heads.

"Come, come, give us a hand, Mary," shouted one of the seamen.

A blush stole across Mary's face. She was a tall, well-built girl of about nineteen summers, with dancing black eyes set in a bonnie face. A favorite, no doubt, with the men.

"A shame!" she said, approaching. "Such stout men surely do not want a woman's help?"

"You speak right, Mary," said Captain Weldon. "John, you should be ashamed of yourself."

John looked either ashamed or bashful; the latter probably. He kept his eyes fixed on the rope he held. He knew Mary was looking at him. He felt like a fool, and was sorry he had called her to come.

"Yeo heave, yeo heave," the boss's voice yelled out. With a mighty pull the boat shot up the beach. "A great pull, Mary," he said, turning to her, dropping the rope he held in his hand.

She gave him back a sweet smile.

John slunk towards her.

"I did not mean to be scornful, Mary," he whispered.

"It was, though, John," she said.

"Say you forgive me, Mary."

She looked indignant. "To call me down to give a hand to haul up the boat is not just the thing for a Yorkshire lad to do," she said, taking no heed of his question.

"I am sorry, Mary," he said, tugging at his sailor's hat. But Mary meant to have her own way. Without another word she turned and joined the women up the beach.

"Too bad, John, to have made her so mad," said Weldon. "You must take care else she will never wed ye."

John felt downright mad with himself. "I did not think she would take it bad, boss. I wish I 'ad not a-spoken," he said, sullenly.

"Come, John, don't get down-hearted o'er it. Mary will have forgot about it by to-morrow. And I believe, John, it's half put on," he said, throwing a wink at him. "She's a deep girl, John, as deep as the ocean to solve." These encouraging words made John feel somewhat better.

"Gee, how it blows!" said the captain, turning and facing the wind. "I wonder how the captain's ship stands it. It will be bad in the English Channel. It was just such a storm as this

44 THE HOUSE ON THE CLIFF

when I and the Cap, who was only a boy, was sailing the *Katie* off the headland, and Violet was born. Do you remember me telling you of it, John? Why the *Katie* did not founder God only knew. She was a brave woman, Vi's mother, she took it so well. Yes, and there's no braver woman in Yorkshire than our Vi Weldon."

He glanced towards Cliff House as he spoke. The shades of night had fallen around. A light could be seen on the cliff top glimmering through one of the windows. Farther south the ever-revolving lights of the lighthouse shone, casting a gleam of light across sea and land.

The wind howled horribly, and the waves thundered and crashed against the shore. The church clock chimed out eight loudly; the sound was carried towards them by the driving wind. The darkness deepened. The two men stood for a moment watching the light on the cliff. The same thoughts filled their minds—one of sympathy for the captain's wife and little boy.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHAT a terrible night it was! A never-forgotten one for the dwellers in Cliff House. The wind shrieked and howled above in a maddening roar, and the waves tumbled and rolled one after the other below, beating with terrific force against the cliff, and sounding like cannons booming the whole night long. The night drew slowly on, but the ever-maddening roar continued.

Violet lay on a sofa, her face showing clearly the agony of thought that passed through her mind. Carl was kneeling down on a rug by her side, his hand clasped by one of hers. The house-keeper sat by the table; beside her lay some worsted with which she had been knitting. Her brow was contracted. She seemed to be in a deep study.

"Why did the captain ever bring the poor creature here?" she muttered to herself; "surely this is the last place God made. Don," she sighed, "would have been more considerate. These storms always upset poor Violet, and no

wonder, too, for it's as bad as being on the ocean living here.

"Violet!" she suddenly said, getting up and placing her hands gently upon her hot forehead, "do you feel better? No, do not speak, love, keep quiet. How your head does burn. I know what it is to have such a headache. Poor lass," she muttered, rising. Going to the cupboard she fetched a bottle of brandy. "Come, dear, drink this," she said, handing her a glass with some of the cognac in it; "it will do you good, love."

Presently there was a loud knock at the front door. Startled, the housekeeper rose and, unbolting the iron bars, peered out into the darkness. "Why, bless me," she exclaimed, "come in, come in, Mr. Weldon, and such a night as this—well, well!"

"Why, uncle, what a surprise visit," gaily cried Carl, as the old sailor, hardly recognizable, entered the room. His cap was tied on his head and his pea-jacket closely buttoned around him.

"Thought you would be a bit lonesome, Vi," said he, unbuttoning his coat; "so I risked my neck to keep you company. This is the worst storm we have had for many a year."

"So good of you to come, uncle," said Violet. "Storms, you know, always upset me," she said sadly.

"Come, come, you worry too much, Vi. Now the captain feels as comfortable as a bug in a rug. I know," he said with a smile; "his gallant ship will be riding through the storm just as smoothly as a cork in a duck pond. No, no, there's no need to worry, Vi, at all."

"I can't help it, uncle. I wish I could. Fred, I know, would be so angry if he knew. He likes to have storms to battle with; he always felt at his best when he was battling with the elements. But there is a great risk for him. Yes, it is a dangerous life, and it always makes me anxious."

"Tut, tut, Vi! Fred is a born sailor. Every gallant sailor loves a storm! To battle with the wind on the cliff top just now was great; to battle with the tempest on board a ship is far greater."

"Sailors, to my mind, are very queer people," interrupted the housekeeper. "For me, Mr. Weldon, I prefer to be indoors such days."

"So much like women."

"And some men, too," said the housekeeper.

"Some, I admit, but they are in the minority. Most men, and all sailors, love to battle and conquer a storm, as much as a general loves to conquer his enemy. How refreshing, how exhilarating, to fight the elements and not to be beaten by them." His large black eyes twinkled as he

48 THE HOUSE ON THE CLIFF.

spoke, and a smile of contentment shone on his weather-beaten face.

He turned towards the table, and, seeing the bottle of brandy there and a glass near by, he helped himself.

"I feel a bit dry, Vi," he remarked; "you do not object?"

"No, uncle. Should you prefer wine the housekeeper will fetch you some."

"No, no, Vi; don't trouble. This will do to a nicety. It's not a drink, though, that I often take," he said, sipping at it; "just at times when I am put out. As a medicine, you know, a little brandy and a good smoke often send away the blues."

"Why not have a smoke, then," immediately exclaimed Carl, who had seated himself by his side.

"Well, well, you little rascal," he laughed, jokingly, patting him gently on his curly head. "I did not say I had the blues, did I?"

Carl laughed.

"That was a good tip, boy," said the old sailor, thrusting his hand deep into his pocket and pulling out an old clay pipe.

Carl watched him filling it. As the smoke left his lips in clouds and rose to the ceiling he looked forward to the time when he would be a man so that he could smoke, too. His father

was a great smoker. He would while away many hours with his pipe. To be without it he would remark, "It's like a fish feels out of water." But are not all sailors fond of their pipe? Better far to be a great smoker than a great drinker.

"All Weldons are pretty fair smokers, Carl," remarked the sailor, glancing at him. "That's their only vice. Your grandpa was a great smoker. Except on duty at sea he was rarely seen without a pipe in his mouth."

"Now, uncle, you must not put such nonsense into Carl's head. Carl will be a greater man than his ancestors if he never smokes. At least the boy has promised me not to touch tobacco until he comes of age."

She glanced at Carl and smiled.

The old sailor gave a cough.

"I am not encouraging him to smoke, Vi. Just telling him plain facts. I was fourteen, though, when I commenced. All Weldons commenced about that age."

"That will do, uncle. Carl will be wiser," she said, affectionately, stroking the boy's head.

"Take my advice," exclaimed the housekeeper, placing the worsted she had been knitting with on the table, and turning to Carl, "and leave tobacco alone."

Weldon laughed loudly.

50 THE HOUSE ON THE CLIFF.

Then he would not be a Weldon, thought he, but he did not say so.

The housekeeper busied herself in clearing away the knitting material that lay about, and set the table for supper.

Outside the storm abated a trifle. But the waves still were beating fiercely against the rocks. The tide was then full, and the spray from the waves was thrown up over the cliff top. A slight rain had commenced which increased hourly. Then the wind gradually died down. The storm had reached its limit. As the tide turned and went down the storm ceased.

CHAPTER IX.

SEVERAL months passed away and the great storm was a bygone memory. A great stillness had come over Cliff House. Violet was lying dangerously ill in bed. The doctor said it was brain fever.

The day had been a glorious one, such as only a June day can be. There was a perfect sky of blue. A gentle, cooling breeze blowing over a crystal sea made the beauty of the day still more lovely.

Carl, all afternoon, had been in his boat on the water, enjoying himself to his heart's content. Diving into the almost transparent water from off the boat, and swimming out to sea and back was a great delight to him.

That same night Violet had a horrible dream, or vision, which gave such a shock to her system that she lay in partial collapse. The doctor in attendance grew anxious.

The night was as balmy as the day had been. The bedroom windows had been thrown wide open to let in the cooling breeze, for the sun had

left the house oppressively warm. Violet's room faced the ocean. In the opposite room slept the housekeeper. In the stillness of the night the housekeeper was awakened by a faint but sharp cry from her mistress's chamber. Startled, she got up, and, lighting a candle, she knocked at her mistress's door. Hearing no answer, she noiselessly entered and was deeply concerned to find her mistress in a dead faint. Violet's face was deathly white, and she was shaking like a frightened child. At her wits' end, for never had she seen her mistress so, the housekeeper hastened to the cupboard for brandy. She got a little through the clenched teeth. Then she knelt down by the bed, and taking hold of her mistress's cold, lifeless hands, she watched with terror in her face. "Violet," she breathed, "speak, Violet."

Presently a sign of life passed over the apparently lifeless frame. Slowly the color came back to the death-like features. Violet's eyes opened. Her lips moved as if to speak.

"Thank God," escaped from the housekeeper's lips. Rising, she said gently: "You have only been dreaming, dear. Do not be afraid," she continued, rubbing back the life into her benumbed body.

What the dream was Violet never said, and it was many days before she was herself again.

Not many weeks after that a brief but mournful cablegram was received from Philadelphia. It read, "Regret sincerely Captain Price lost overboard in the tropics."

A wail of anguish burst from Violet's lips. "It was true," she wailed, and immediately fell unconscious in the chair in which she was sitting.

Captain Price's ship had cleared Cape Horn by several weeks, and was steering in a north-easterly direction under full sail. A Yankee ship was sighted by them which they immediately signalled to. It was a four-master sailing ship bound for San Francisco. For several hours they ran a neck-to-neck race. The wind was fair. A south-westerly trade wind was blowing. By dog-watch a sudden squall overtook them, and ere night fell the ship was lost sight of. The squall was very sudden and fierce, which is often the case in those tropical regions. It struck the ship about the beam and ripped the mizzen royal into rags before the watch could give assistance.

Captain Price calmly paced the poop. He had handled the ship in many such storms and many worse ones. The squall did not alarm him greatly.

"All hands aloft to furl the royal and top-gallant sails," he ordered.

The men obeyed, and soon stripped the masts clear of the royal and top-gallant sails.

54 THE HOUSE ON THE CLIFF.

The ship rolled over to port, for the squall struck her full on the starboard side. The spray from the waves, carried by the fierce wind, washed the deck. A long, milky way hissed and foamed behind her, for she rushed along like a greyhound before the maddening wind.

"Reef the mizen topsail!" thundered the captain.

"Aye, aye," came from several voices.

The excitement by this time was intense. The wind roared, the masts creaked and groaned. Waves rose and came bounding on deck. Men ran hither and thither.

During the voyage there had been constant friction between the captain and his first mate Donovan. Donovan had not got over the captain's triumph in gaining the hand of his love. Many a time he had wished the captain at the bottom of the ocean. This mad impulse at length got the upper hand of him, and the embittered man only waited for an opportunity to put that wish into effect. That he would be a murderer by doing so did not for a moment enter his head, for he gave himself up to the tempting thought of what might happen if the captain were out of the way. A gleaming vision of Violet accepting him as her husband intoxicated his brain.

The squall by nightfall had reached its limit. The ship was stripped of all sails with the exception of the main and foresail.

At eight bells (eight o'clock p.m.) it suddenly died down, but the waves were still high and the ship rolled heavily.

"Set the fore-top-gallant sail," suddenly the captain thundered out.

It was the port watch on deck. The hands rushed forward to loosen the clew-lines and bunt-lines; others climbed up aloft to let go the gaskets.

"A light on the starboard bow!" suddenly yelled the man on the lookout.

The captain walked towards the poop rails and leaned over to obtain a clearer view of the ship's light. It was no doubt the Yankee ship they had again sighted.

Presently the first mate, Donovan, came running up to the poop. "Set the main-top-gallant sail, sir?" he asked. The captain had not heard him, for he was leaning far over the ship's side. Although the squall had abated the wind was still somewhat heavy.

A sudden mad impulse to get rid of the captain seized the mate, and without another thought he sprang at him and with a bound sent him headlong overboard.

"Good God!" he groaned, "what—what have

56 THE HOUSE ON THE CLIFF.

I done!" He clenched his teeth tightly, his eyes rolled wildly from side to side. He made a jump for the life-belts, expecting every moment to hear the cry, "A man overboard! a man overboard!" But none came. The night was dark, intensely dark. Not a soul had seen his traitorous action. The ship sped on. For a moment the mate held the life-belt in his trembling hands and waited breathlessly for the words that clashed through his brain: "Man overboard! Man overboard!"

Suddenly the seamen broke out into a chant—"Blow, boys, blow to California, there's plenty of gold,"—they were hoisting up the top-gallant yard.

Startled to his sense, the mate dropped the belt he grasped and sped forward. Nobody had seen him do the dastardly deed, not a person knew the captain was overboard. He was a free man.

"Set the main and mizzen top-gallant sail," he shouted.

The men rushed to their posts, and by eight bells, twelve o'clock, all sails were once more set.

By daybreak the captain was found missing by the steward after he had prepared breakfast. A search over the ship was immediately made, but, as a matter of course, without result. It soon got spread about that the captain was missing. So

THE HOUSE ON THE CLIFF. 57

the first mate took charge of the ship. The entry in the log simply said, "Captain Price washed overboard when in a severe squall in the Tropic of Cancer."

This was the remarkable vision that Violet had beheld.

CHAPTER X.

THAT terrible cablegram came as a severe shock to all. Although a man of reserved habits, Captain Price had been very much liked by his friends. There was not a kinder-hearted man in Yorkshire. But he was not so generally popular as some much less worthy men. To be on board his ship was more to his taste than to attend an afternoon tea in a drawing-room. The main weight of the trouble fell on Violet. She had only just recovered from the last severe illness, which left her far from strong, when the message confirmed the sad news which the vision had so truly foretold. As she lay moaning in bed, so near death's door, she would often ramble in her delirium of the vision. The poor old housekeeper rarely left the bedside through her long illness. She lived in fear lest those wild words she had uttered would be heard. So she determined to nurse her personally through the long illness.

It came round to August. The windows, day and night, would be left wide open to let in the cooling sea air. Her bed faced the blue water.

From the beach could be heard laughter and shouts from the children sporting on the sands. It was their holidays. The sea was calm those days, and the waves would gently and musically beat against the shore.

The doctor had called that morning. In the night Violet had become worse. The house-keeper was thoroughly worn out with the long and trying vigil. The doctor noticed the work was painfully telling on her, and advised her to take a rest, proposing to send a hospital nurse to relieve her.

"You are thoroughly worn out, my good woman," he said to her as they left the sick chamber. "You really must take a rest or else you will be laid up. I have been speaking to Mrs. Bye, who will come and give assistance in nursing if you are willing."

"No, no, doctor. Do not send her. I am not ill. I do not need any help."

"My dear woman, you need a rest. Come, come," he said kindly, "I must insist upon you being relieved."

Her lips quivered. Her pinched, pale face turned a shade paler. She was determined to have her way.

"No, no, doctor," she said in a firm voice. "No one but I shall nurse my child back again to health. Have no fear, doctor, for the result."

"My good woman, I do not doubt that you are competent enough. It will take time and careful nursing before Mrs. Price is out of danger, and I am afraid you are not able to stand the ordeal. However," he said, for he knew it would be of no use to argue any more with her, as she was in such a determined mood, "continue with the same medicine. I will call this evening."

The medicine the doctor brought seemed to soothe poor Violet's fever. Her delirium ceased and she lay quieter in bed.

Entering the room the old woman crept quietly up to her bed and seated herself on a chair close by. She knelt over her, gently stroking away the loose hair that strayed about her forehead. Tears filled her eyes as she watched the once beautiful but now transparently delicate features of her darling's face—so near was she to the shadow of death.

The old woman's heart ached, for during her delirium Violet had raved about her dream, and had said that Donovan was a murderer.

"Poor girl!" she sighed; "she knows not what she says, she knows not what she says," was the old woman's only comfort.

She leaned over and gently kissed her pale lips. A tear fell from her eyes on to Violet's face. "Poor child," she broke out afresh. "she knows not what she says, she knows not what she says."

Violet moved and showed signs of coming back to consciousness. The old woman arose from her kneeling position and sat back in the chair.

A faint sigh escaped from the patient's lips. Presently she slowly opened her eyes. The shades of night were falling around. The sun had set like a ball of blood behind the cloud that lined the western horizon, and the sea was illumined with red and purple from the dying sun.

Violet looked out on the ocean, and awakening from unconsciousness, the terrible vision again flashed before her. She felt that it was a true message.

A faint knock came at the door. Carl quickly entered and slowly crept up to her bedside. He caught the eyes of his mother and knew that she had regained consciousness.

"Mother, mother," he said, clasping his arms gently around her.

"My child, my child!"

In that fond embrace the old woman left them as she slowly retired from the room.

As if the flood-gates of tears had suddenly burst open, Violet, for the first time since her illness, wept. Then, twining her arms around the boy, she fell into a peaceful sleep.

When the doctor called a little later he saw at once that the danger was over.

CHAPTER XI.

AUTUMN had come around once more. The leaves had turned their different colors and gorgeous tints and were falling. The day was stormy, as many an autumn day is. The wind was chilly, and the black clouds above threatened rain. A heavy mist lay over the headland.

Violet was now convalescent. Worn almost to a shadow, she lay propped up by a feather pillow on the sofa. In her hands she held a letter. It was from Donovan. The ship had arrived only the other day and was safely lying in a Liverpool dock.

As she read her face turned pale. The hard lines around her mouth that had set in with the illness hardened. But those were the only outward signs given of a sorrowful and troubled heart within. Folding up the letter, she handed it to the housekeeper, who sat close by.

"Poor Donovan feels the trouble sadly," said Mrs. Jones, folding up the letter.

Violet sighed.

"You cannot see him to-morrow, dear?" she

asked, somewhat timidly. She knew very well as a nurse that her mistress ought not by any means to have such a visitor, but the old woman's prejudice in favor of Donovan was strong.

Violet shook her head. "No, not to-morrow. How can I?" Her voice trembled. "It would be far, far better if he never came," she said, absently. Her eyes had a far-away look in them. There was a tremor in her voice that was painful to hear.

The housekeeper bit her lip. "Come, dear," she said, rising and placing the pillow more comfortably under her, "perhaps when you are stronger he may call."

There was a pathetic look in Violet's eyes.

"Shall I drop him a line, dear, and tell him that you are not strong enough to receive visitors yet? Perhaps you may be next week."

"I am afraid I shall never be strong again," she said, sadly.

"Oh, yes, you will, Violet. Only have courage. God does not let His people suffer for ever. A storm comes to every one at times; perhaps it is a long, long one, but peace will come in time."

Violet looked up at her and sighed with weariness. What could her old companion realize of the trouble that was such a load to bear? Her moralizing was little to Violet's taste. How

64 THE HOUSE ON THE CLIFF.

could the housekeeper know what was making her heart bleed?

"Oh, nurse!" she said, and burst into a flood of tears.

"Come, child, do not cry."

"Will she ever be herself again?" thought the old woman. "How sad it all is! Poor Donovan will be disappointed when he gets the answer I must write him."

As soon as she had an opportunity she wrote to Donovan. Violet watched her as she sat at the writing-desk with her slow-moving pen. What was she writing? Violet hoped that she was giving Donovan no encouragement. The thought was hateful to her. "How could I receive a murderer?" a voice said within her. But on the other hand she asked herself if it was right to judge by a vision, no matter how strikingly true it might appear.

Suddenly there was a shout in the passage, a stamping of running feet, and the boy Carl came in.

"Mother, mother!" he cried, "I have received a letter from De . Hurrah, he's coming to-morrow to see us. How jolly!" he exclaimed. His smiling face glowed with health. His blue eyes sparkled.

"Hush, child, not so much noise," warned

the housekeeper. "Your dear mother is not quite so well to-day."

His smile died away, and a sad expression took its place.

His mother saw the change and was deeply touched. Perhaps for Carl's sake she ought not to be so set against Donovan. Yet something like a hatred for Donovan, a hatred that she could not suppress, had grown in her, and at times she feared for her own reason. She had brooded constantly over the dream, not daring to open out her heart to anyone for comfort. She little knew that in her delirium she had talked of it. She came to the conclusion that she would not accuse till proof of the deed was given, although she could not help thinking that the vision she had seen was true, not simply a fictitious imagination, the result of an overstrained mind.

"I am sorry, mother, you are worse," said Carl, as he noticed the searching eyes of his stepmother upon him.

He handed her Don's letter. As she read it she tried to think that he was innocent. Could a murderer write such a kind letter? she thought. She shuddered. Folding up the letter she handed it back to her son.

"Mrs. Jones has written to him, Carl. He will come before long, darling."

66 THE HOUSE ON THE CLIFF.

"Yes, Carl," said the housekeeper; "your mother is not quite strong enough to receive anyone yet. It will be wiser to defer it for a time."

"Just as you like, mother, dear. If only father was coming, too, how happy I would be."

There was a silence for a long time. Violet turned her head away, her eyes filled. Presently the housekeeper got up and quietly left the room.

CHAPTER XII.

It was a drizzling wet day when Donovan left Liverpool for Yorkshire. A cold mist lay over the ocean, so that one could not see many paces ahead. At intervals one could hear the fog-horns of the ships upon the water.

Don did not get the letter the housekeeper sent him, for he had left the city before the train bearing the news arrived. He had doffed his sailor suit, and wore a black suit of clothes. He had bought a silk hat, and had had a mourning band put on it. He wished to make his appearance effective. But as the train neared the Yorkshire coast, a great nervousness oppressed him. The color of his face, the dark tan, changed to a livid white. Arriving at the station he immediately made for the refreshment room and ordered a brandy-and-soda to steady his nerves. The burden he had on his conscience had made him a changed man since the murder—a complete nervous wreck. Do what he would, he could not for the life of him shake off the feeling. At night he would lay awake for hours, fighting hard to con-

quer his guilty conscience. The crew had noticed the sudden change that came over him and often wondered why. Fits of melancholy seized him, and at times he shunned his fellowmen as if they were lepers.

A great depression seized him as he stepped on to the quiet little station platform of his native town and made his way to the Queen's Hotel.

"Curse the damnable feeling," he muttered savagely, trying hard to shake it off. He hurried along with his head bent and eyes fixed on the stone pavement. Everybody he passed, he thought, was looking at him, and he even went so far as to think that they could read his thoughts, that they knew he had committed a great crime.

Arriving at the Queen's he quickly made his way to the bar-room, with his eyes glancing nervously from side to side to see if he had been recognized; but seeing no one there he knew, for the people in the room were visitors on their summer holiday, he took courage, and partly collected his bewildered thoughts. He immediately ordered and gulped down a glass of liquor. Since he was last seen in town he had grown a moustache, which altered the expression of his face greatly, so that he was hardly recognizable.

Presently Violet's uncle entered the room. It

was his wont every evening to have a drink and smoke, and to hear the news of the hour. The Queen's Hotel was a great centre of social talk. Men met there most evenings to talk over the latest happenings either at home or abroad.

Don slunk to the other end of the room to a chair in a corner, so that he would not be noticed. He did not feel himself prepared to face the man he knew so well. By that corner there was another door that led out into the back yard, and from there into the street. Noticing it, he opened it and sneaked out. Just as he was leaving he heard Captain Weldon telling the man that came with him that he, Donovan, had been seen in town. He did not wait to hear more, nor to see who the man was that Weldon was addressing.

The rain had ceased. The sky was clear, the moon being at its full. But the clouds were scudding across the sky, carried by a sea breeze. It was a cool wind, which seemed momentarily to soothe the hot feverishness that tortured him. For a short time he paced up and down. Then, suddenly halting, as if he had decided what to do, he turned around and sharply walked towards Cliff House.

The tide was at its full and was beating hard against the cliff. His thoughts wandered back to the days when he had so often trodden the same path to the cliff top, thinking of Violet,

for it was his favorite walk. But what a changed man he had become! If circumstances had turned out kindly for him then he would never have committed his dreadful crime. "Life is a great lottery," he thought, with the wish of the criminal to lay the blame on chance.

He suddenly stopped and listened, for he had heard footsteps behind him. The moon was hidden behind a cloud, and as the cloud passed by he caught sight of someone following him behind. He sprang behind a boulder near by and there waited. Nearer and nearer the person came. He squatted closer down, and not until he heard the rustle of clothes pass by did he move. He then peeped cautiously out, and catching the sight of a woman whom he appeared to recognize, he sprang up. It was Violet's old housekeeper. She gave a shriek and fled.

"Stop, stop! Did I scare you? I apologize. Do you not know me? I am Donovan."

She gave a sharp, hysterical laugh.

"Oh, how you scared me, Mr. Donovan," she said, breathlessly. "Well, I never! When did you arrive?"

"Have you not heard," he asked, casting his eyes towards the lights of the promenade.

"No, no. But how you have altered, Don. I would never have known you if you had not spoken. You look ten years older."

He gave a harsh laugh.

"Not so bad as that," he said, tugging vigorously at his long moustache. "Of course, it is my moustache that makes all the difference," he said.

The clouds that hovered around had completely dispersed, and the moon shone full in his face. His face was deathly pale, and his features were haggard. He turned his head away from her. Her keen scrutiny annoyed him.

"How is Mrs. Price and the boy?" he jerked out.

"You did not get my letter, then?"

"No. Did you write?"

"Yes, I posted it last night."

"Well, well. The train must have crossed," he said, absently.

"Poor Violet is still far from well," said Mrs. Jones.

"Indeed! I'm sorry to hear it. I was thinking I might call to-morrow and see her."

"No, do not, Don. She indeed is not strong enough to see anyone at present. She has been very ill. Meet me next Monday on the cliff; I will arrange the day with Mrs. Price and let you know. But I am afraid you will find my mistress greatly changed. This trouble has upset her so much. It is so sad, but time heals all wounds, 'tis said. I trust it will hers."

72 THE HOUSE ON THE CLIFF.

Donovan bit savagely at his moustache.

"I will not detain you," he said, abruptly. "I will meet you on Monday at this time, here."

"Very well, Mr. Donovan. Good night," she said, thrusting out her hand to him.

He clasped it and turned around back again to town. Out of earshot he gave a loud curse.

"D—— the luck," he said, savagely, more than once.

CHAPTER XIII.

It was John Bye that Violet's uncle was talking to at the Queen's Hotel—John, the fisherman, who you may remember had called Mary to give a hand to haul up the boats on the beach. John was a happy man now, for Mary had accepted him as a lover. The wedding was to come off shortly.

"I was in the station, boss," he was saying, "to meet the six o'clock Liverpool express. 'Hang me if that isn't our Don,' I said to my mate, as I saw a man step on to the platform from the train. I was not mistaken either, for sure enough it was him."

The old seaman looked surprised.

"Gad," he said, tugging at his long beard. "Where the devil did he go to?"

"I dunno. I was hurrying off to the guard's van for a parcel I expected from York. When I turned back he was gone. My uncle said to me, 'Who's he, John?' The man seemed in a mighty hurry; he rushed past me as if he was distracted."

"Well, well, you know, John, I feel very suspicious about that sea yarn. They say Captain Price was washed overboard in a storm. Now, John, that tale will never do for me. For you know as well as I that our Cap was not a man to lose his life so easily. There has been some foul play, it appears to me."

"Surely, boss, you do not think that," said John, opening widely his eyes.

"That's just what I do. Ye remember me telling you that that Donovan was a scoundrel?"

John gave a whistle.

"That's just what he is—a scoundrel."

"Come, come, surely you do not think he has done away with Captain Price, Mr. Weldon?"

"That's just what I do. But keep it quiet, John; keep it quiet. I'll fish it out, and if it is so it's a rope and the yard-arm for the villain; leastways the gallus," the old salt said, in a confidential voice.

"It does look a little suspicious-like, boss, as I think it over. Mind ye, nobody appears to have seen him fall overboard, neither the time it happened."

"That's just the thread I am working on," said the old man. "Has not the Cap been at sea all his life? Is he a man who would lose his life so easily? Not he, else I am greatly mistaken. You mark my word, there has been foul play,

and before I am many weeks older I will find who is in it. Whoever it is shall not go scot free."

The old man was "all worked up." He began to pace up and down the bar-room. He knew he had a hard problem in front of him to solve, and he intended to do his best to get at the bottom of the mystery.

"Come, boss," said John, "have a drink. What will you have, sir?"

"Well, thank you, John; I'll take a glass of ale. When does the train leave for Liverpool, John?" he asked.

"Nine-thirty this evening, sir. Are you going there?"

"Yes, I think I will go there and have a yarn with the ship's crew. Maybe I will get something out of them. It's surprising what a little grog will do, John," he said, with a twinkle in his eyes.

"That's a good idea. Sure if any man can get at the bottom of it, it will be you. Well, let's have another touch."

It was Captain Weldon's turn now. He ordered two glasses of rum, which is the seaman's cordial.

"By the by, boss, you will be back in time for the wedding?" said John, looking rather sheepish.

76 THE HOUSE ON THE CLIFF.

"Certain. I would never miss that. Mary's a good girl. She will make you a good wife, John. She's a good, hearty girl, and no nonsense about her. You're in luck, John."

John laughed. "I'm satisfied," he said.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE old sailor returned from Liverpool, but he was none the wiser. The crew could not give him any more information on the subject than was entered in the log. "It was clear that the 'old man' was washed overboard," they said. It was a great storm, and the night being very dark would account for nobody seeing the "old man" fall. Notwithstanding that, Captain Weldon followed up every clue he could think of. The days wore on, and they began to think they must give it up as a hopeless case.

But there were people in Cliffgate who thought better of Donovan than did Mr. Weldon. These friends made him welcome, and he began to feel once more at his ease. His depression had worn away. He was less anxious. Who could condemn him now? The crime never could be brought home to him, he was positively sure. People could hardly call it a murder anyhow, for he was not in his right senses when he did it; he could be blamed only as a madman. Providence had been kind to him, he thought. Perhaps his guilt would be overlooked.

Since his meeting with the housekeeper on the cliff top he had visited Violet twice. He found her more changed than he had expected to find her. The cold way in which she received him made him extremely uneasy. Her searching glance, her rather stern expression, sent a shudder through his whole being. Again the consciousness of guilt rushed over him. He wondered if she suspected him. But how could she? Was there something in a woman's intuitions that enabled her to detect a wrong-doer?

His frequent visits to Cliff House soon caused a rumor about town that some day would see him its master. This got to the ears of Violet through her son Carl, who had overheard a group of fishermen, when attending to their nets on the beach, discuss the probability of a marriage in that quarter. Carl spoke of it with wonder. Violet was indignant, as well she might be. The light-hearted boy called it only a joke, and was pained to see his mother so offended.

The officious old housekeeper was really at the bottom of it. She was radiant with the idea that her old wish would become true. Often when in town she would gossip with her fisher-folk friends.

"Probably some day," she would say, "Vi will be called 'Mrs. Donovan.' You know that I always wished it to be so. Now Providence has

been kind. Not that, mind you, not that Vi did not love Captain Price. I can assure you that no wife could have loved her husband better. That is the cause of all her sickness. But the captain did not deserve it, he was not the right man for her. I knew it from the beginning. Was it not I who told her she would be far happier if she would wed Don? No, she was obstinate, and would have her own way. Dear me, all through those weary years of wedded life, I can assure you, he behaved to her—" She stopped to take breath. "Well, well," she continued, "not like a good husband should. Now Don was head-over-heels in love with her. He would have made her a loving husband. Still, the time is coming when she will see her great mistake and wish that she had taken my advice from the beginning. There is one consolation—it is better late than never."

"But Captain Price was an upright, straightforward, kind-hearted man, and that is the general opinion, too. I was sorry to hear of his death," said the elderly woman with whom she was conversing.

The old housekeeper gave a slight cough to hide a little confusion. "Oh, dear me, Mrs. Shaw, surely you do not think me hard-hearted," she said. "Of course, we are sorry when any person dies. But, dear me, must we not all die at

some time? Remember, God does all these things for the good. This may be a blessing in disguise!" Mrs. Jones pulled a long face.

"Tut, tut. Perhaps you think so. I don't. Why, it is not three weeks ago when I called upon Mrs. Price. I was pained to see how ill she looked. Poor girl, she seemed downright broken-hearted over the loss of her dear husband."

"Yes, yes; Violet has been very ill. But is it not natural, Mrs. Shaw? Poor Violet has a kind nature, else she would not have taken the trouble so to heart."

Mrs. Shaw sighed but did not speak.

"By-the-by, Mrs. Shaw," said the house-keeper, "have you heard that Mr. Donovan is studying for a captain's certificate? He has great hopes of passing. He is going down to Liverpool to-morrow, and I hope he will get through successfully. It is not a very easy task, I have heard. My great-grandfather was a captain, but not in the merchant service, but the Royal Navy. That is the service I should like Carl to go in for. To my mind the Royal Navy is far superior to the merchant service. But, no, it's the merchant service he's after. Of course, no wonder. Like father like son. All the Prices have been sailors."

"Yes, also his mother's side," said Mrs. Shaw.

"A regular born sailor he must be. He's a nice boy. I have always liked Carl," she continued.

The housekeeper nodded.

"I did not see you at Mary's wedding, Mrs. Shaw," she said.

"No, I was out of town. I am disappointed I missed it."

"It was a swell affair. How pretty she looked."

"That she would. Mary's a very pretty girl."

"Bless me, how the time flies," said the housekeeper, glancing at the church clock. "Well, well, I must really be going. Good-bye! Call and see us, Mrs. Shaw, soon."

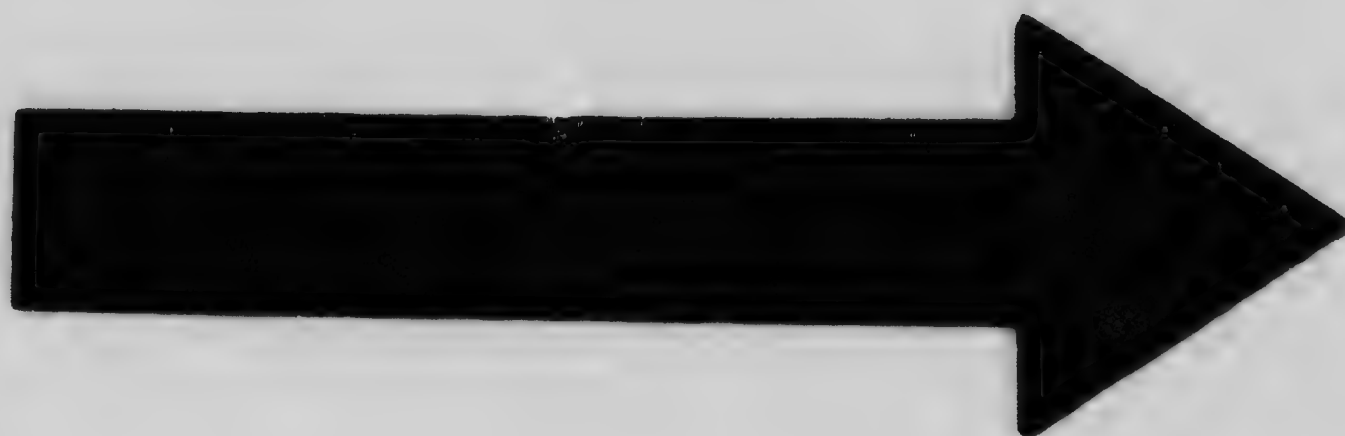
"Thank you, Mrs. Jones; I will look you up one of these days."

Straightening her bonnet, Mrs. Jones turned and went home.

"I do not believe the woman has any feeling," Mrs. Shaw thought. "The poor captain has only been dead a little over six months. I am sure Mrs. Price thinks differently."

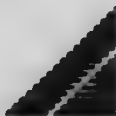
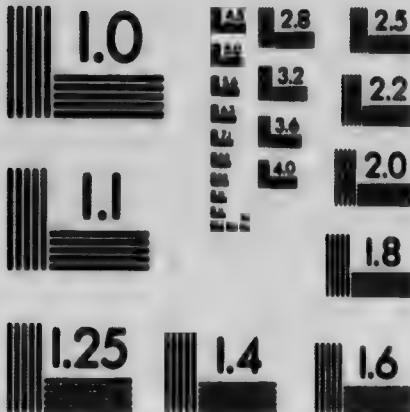
"By the way, I must call on Mary," she thought, as she approached the house. "I have not called since the wedding. She will think I have forgotten her."

Mr. Bye's house was a substantial brick cottage facing the sea front. John was out in his fishing-smack, and only Mary was at home.



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"Come in, Mrs. Shaw; so pleased to see you," she said, cordially. "John's out a-fishing. Take a seat.

"Thank you."

"This suite of furniture is one of my numerous wedding gifts," she said, glancing around the room. "Isn't it nice?"

"Very pretty indeed, Mrs. Bye."

"They are Vi's present. So kind of her. Poor woman, how sad it is about the captain! He was a great friend of John's. They tell me that Donovan is to be the happy man. Of course, Vi will not stay single long, and she so young and pretty."

"So Vi's housekeeper was telling me this afternoon. I can hardly believe it."

"Why not? It seems quite natural. Donovan was her old sweetheart. John tells me they are already engaged, though, of course, it is only a rumor he has heard."

"It should be contradicted. I saw Violet only a few weeks ago, and I can assure you that she has not a shadow of a thought of marrying again. She is far too much upset to dream of such a thing."

"Really? She is going to stay with us next week for a month or two, and the housekeeper, too. They intend shutting Cliff House up. I think the change will do her good."

"That will be nice for her, Mary. What are they going to do with Carl then?"

"Dear me, have you not heard? Carl feels quite a man. He is going to sea."

"No? Not really? And so young!"

"Yes, he is sailing in the barque that lies at anchor in the bay, as an apprentice. It will do him good, too. He intends to be a sailor. It will give him a thorough training."

"Who's the captain?"

"Why, dear me! Have you not heard? Donovan will sail her."

"Well, I never. This is news! I am glad for Carl's sake. He will be sure to be well looked after. Pray, when does the ship sail?"

"She's under orders for next week, John tells me. Bound for Yokohama. John says she's a first-class boat."

CHAPTER XV.

DONOVAN was lounging in a comfortable arm-chair in the bar-room of the Queen's Hotel. He was smoking a good cigar, and his face wore a look of satisfaction. Fate had been kind to him—far kinder than he had ever dreamt of hoping. He sat picturing the days of happiness that he imagined might lie before him. He had just arrived from Liverpool, where he had been successful in getting a captain's certificate. "Some day," he told himself, "and not in the far distant future either, I shall be Violet's husband." So he pleased himself by thinking.

Violet and the housekeeper were at this time staying with the Byes. Donovan felt sure that the housekeeper would be friendly to him. Mary Bye was another who thought well of him and would say a good word to Violet for him.

Donovan thought he was playing his cards well, and he smiled contentedly. Ringing the bell that stood close by on the round table, he ordered a brandy-and-soda. After refreshing himself he intended to take a stroll to Cliff House to see that all the doors were properly secured.

Again a smile hovered around his lips, for he felt himself already the master of the building. He pulled out his watch. It was seven o'clock. Darkness had set in. Picking up a newspaper that lay on the table, he read under the heading of "Doings Around Town": "It is rumored that next month our townsman, Mr. Donovan, will be wedded to Mrs. Violet Price. We wish the happy couple all success."

"By gad!" he laughed, "that's a little previous. I wonder who put that in." He glanced at the heading of the paper to see the date. It was a three weeks' old local paper.

The barmaid brought him the brandy. He soon tossed it off and ordered another. Presently his attention was attracted by a man who stood by the bar. He had the impression that he had seen him before, but he could not recollect when or where. The man wore a black overcoat, with the collar, which was a wide one, well buttoned up, so that it partly covered his face. The newcomer glanced now and again at him. Donovan felt sure he had seen him before, perhaps aboard. It was no business of his to find out, he thought. Presently the barmaid brought him his second brandy. Drinking it, he immediately arose. Flinging the remainder of the half-smoked cigar away, he strolled towards the door. On his way he passed close by the stranger.

As Donovan left the room the man went to the table he had left and picked up the newspaper. Donovan had left the page open, and the stranger's glance rested on the few lines referring to the proposed wedding. Reading them his face turned deathly pale and he flung the paper down with a loud curse. Turning sharply around, he hastily left the room. The suddenness of his behavior attracted the attention of the barmaid.

"Well, well, I wonder what's come over the man?" she said, giving an extra polish to the glasses. "There must be something startling in the paper to cause such a quick move. Such is life," she said with a smile, tripping across the room with feminine curiosity towards the open newspaper. For a moment a smile lingered on her face as she read. "Bah!" she suddenly said, with a toss of her head, "another of Mrs. Price's sweethearts. Silly man!"

She laughed gaily and tripped back to the bar.

The stranger went out into the still night. The man he hungered after was only a few yards ahead. He stood for a moment, then slowly followed, keeping him in sight.

It was a beautiful night. Above, the stars twinkled in a clear sky. The moon threw a silver streak across the black water. A slight breeze, cooling, blew across the land. The tide

was full, and the little waves were splashing up the shingles.

The man noticed that Donovan was making towards the cliff. He guessed where he was going, too, and followed slowly. He knew every inch of the road, so kept at a further distance from Donovan, as if afraid of being suspected of shadowing him. A sudden bend to the right led around a rocky cliff which opened into the winding path which Donovan took. Taking this path he hastened his pace to a run. Then entering the trail Donovan took, he crouched down behind a large rock. The man turned down the collar of his overcoat and waited there. The moon shone clear in his face. It was deathly white. His teeth were clenched tight together, and his breath came and went quickly.

Nearer to the spot Donovan came. For a moment he stopped and looked behind. The light from the lamps along the esplanade was reflected in the quiet water far below. Then he gazed across the water, where lay the barque lit up by her headlights. A smile crossed his lips. He then turned and went on. Approaching the rock, a cry from behind it suddenly startled him. It echoed far across the quiet water in a fierce yell, "Scoundrel! Scoundrel!" For a moment he stood dazed, then immediately a man threw himself upon him. He staggered backwards as if

drunk as the man hurled himself upon him and held him in a tight grasp around the waist. With a great effort he steadied himself and threw his arms around his assailant in a death-like grip. They swayed backwards and forwards. Then he caught sight of the man's face and gave an awful shriek. A faintness seized him. Nearer the edge of the cliff he was drawn in their struggle. Then the man unclasped his grip, and Donovan staggered backward. Slowly his assailant came towards him again. Slowly Donovan retired, his face white, his teeth chattering. Then his foot caught in a projecting root and, with a yell of despair, he fell over the cliff. A dull thud sounded in the keen night air.

Captain Price peered over the cliff. Donovan had fallen upon the rocks sixty feet below, and must have been killed instantly.

"An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth," said the captain, grimly. "But I didn't kill him."

CHAPTER XVI.

WE must now go back to a period a considerable time before the events recorded in the last chapter.

"Can you make out that object yonder, Captain?" The speaker was the first mate of the Yankee four-master, who had caught a glimpse of some dark form floating on the water.

The captain immediately levelled the telescope he held towards the object.

"By gad, it's a man. Give orders to heave-to. We'll lower a boat," he exclaimed, hastily.

"Aye, aye, sir!" sang the mate, springing forward down the poop ladder.

His whistle immediately sounded clear, followed by the cry, "Heave to!"

It was the morning's first watch after the storm. The darkness had just broken; a red streak of light lit up the eastern sky, while the night's dark clouds began rapidly to disperse.

"The man's alive," exclaimed the captain, as he watched the boat that had been lowered make its way across the water towards the floating object.

"I guess," said the mate, "it's one of the crew of the English ship we sighted last night."

"He's a lucky dog, then, whoever he be," said the captain. "See, he's safe now."

The boat had shot alongside him, and the crew shipping their oars, the coxswain pulled the half-drowned man into the boat.

It was Captain Price they had saved from a watery grave. The captain, in the height of the storm, had put on a cork belt, and it was this that saved him from drowning. But he was more dead than alive. Getting him on board they worked the water out of him and brought back life into his body. The shock and long exposure in the water brought on a severe attack of ague, with which he was laid up for months. How he came to be overboard he never told, and his identity he also kept a secret. His only wish was to wreak vengeance on his would-be murderer. When they arrived at San Francisco he was detained in the hospital for over three months. When pronounced strong enough by the doctor to leave, he went overland by rail to New York, and from there crossed by steamer to Liverpool. From Liverpool he took train for his native town in Yorkshire.

It was the night after Captain Price's arrival that he encountered Donovan, with the tragic result already narrated. One look at the still

form of his would-be murderer was enough, and leaving the scene he slowly proceeded to Cliff House. He found it locked and deserted. He tried the doors and windows without avail. What painful thoughts flashed through his mind! His wife must have married the villain who had just come to his end. The lines he had read in the local paper, and the fact that the house was closed and deserted, prevented his taking a second thought. His wife! His head reeled, his brain seemed on fire. It was too terrible to think about. For a time he held his burning forehead in his hands as one who had received a great blow. Then the strong seaman wept like a child. He sat down on the steps of the house in which he had taken so much pride, and the full force of his trouble came upon him. But by degrees the necessity of action made itself felt. He must not remain at Cliffgate—that was certain. Pulling out his watch, he saw that it was nearly eleven o'clock. There was a train to Liverpool at half-an-hour after midnight. He determined to go by it. Then he would get a berth on some outward-bound ship. Rising, he hastened down the rocky path. Coming to the bottom of the descent, he felt a strange fascination of desire to look upon the shattered form of him who was in intent his murderer, and who had wrecked his life. The moon had risen

higher, and her light, as she was in the second quarter, was sufficient to show surrounding objects with some clearness. Captain Price had recovered his self-possession, and was prepared to act.

Donovan had fallen on his face on a jagged rock. His neck was broken, and the face battered out of all recognition. The captain turned the body over. He had seen death too often to lose his nerve now, and besides he had made up his mind what to do. He would remove all traces of identity from the body, and carry it across the sands to the water, that it might be floated out by the outgoing tide. At that part of the coast there was a strong undertow. Rapidly but carefully he abstracted everything but the dead man's money from his pockets, putting them in his own capacious ones. Then he carried the body across to the water—going into it until the waves were up to his knees, and, watching his opportunity, cast it from him.

A single gas jet was burning in the waiting-room at the railway station when he arrived there, and, taking out his watch, he saw that it would be nearly an hour before the train started. The station was deserted and silent. He paced the platform, peered into the windows, and tried several doors. All were locked except those of

the waiting-room and the porters' room at the end of the platform. Gently opening the latter, he heard loud snores. The porter on duty was very evidently sound asleep.

Returning to the waiting-room, he drew a chair up to the table, and began to examine the dead man's effects. They comprised a watch and chain, a pocket-book, a bundle of papers, and a revolver. He put the revolver and the watch and chain in his pocket. Hastily glancing at the contents of the pocket-book, he secreted that also. Then he untied the string binding the papers, and began carefully to examine them. He found a master's certificate made out in the name of Donovan, a number of bills of lading and other nautical papers, and several letters. One of these last was from the owners to Donovan, saying that the barque *Minnie* would be brought round to Cliffgate, under the charge of the first mate, an Italian by the name of I. Mantelli; that Donovan was to join her there, take command, and proceed to Valparaiso. The letter proceeded: "As this is a fresh crew, and none of them are acquainted with you, we enclose a letter introducing you to Mr. Mantelli. Trusting you will make a favorable voyage," etc., etc.

A bold plan instantly suggested itself to Captain Price. It needed nerve, but he would do it. He would personate Donovan and take command

of the *Minnie*. He put the rest of the papers in his pocket, after seeing, with an experienced seaman's eye, that they comprised everything necessary for him to make the voyage, and strode rapidly from the railway station.

It was then midnight. The moon was sinking. Dark clouds hovered around, shutting the stars from view. The wind had risen and howled mournfully. He quickened his steps. The night became darker, but the captain knew every inch of the road. Soon he found himself in the dimly-lighted streets of the town. The place was deserted, the greater part of the inhabitants had retired for the night. He made his way up to the small inn near the beach, where he expected some of the ship's crew would be staying. The landlord was just shutting up, but he secured a room for the night. He learned from the host—a recent arrival in the town—that the mate, Mantelli, and two of the sailors of the *Minnie* occupied the next room to him.

At six o'clock he was downstairs, and when the landlord appeared he told him to arouse Mantelli and tell him he was wanted. When the mate came down the captain said to him, "Well, Mr. Mantelli, here's a letter I have for you, and I hope we shall get on well together."

The first mate glanced over the missive. He touched his cap.

"I'm sure I hope we shall, sir; I will do my best."

"We will go aboard as soon as we have had breakfast. You have a couple of men here; send them to bring the boat to the top quay—I don't care to go down town."

"Aye, aye, sir," responded the mate, promptly.

It was ten o'clock in the morning when the *Minnie* set sail. The day was balmy. A slight breeze was wafted across the headland with sufficient strength to fill out the sails, which carried her along over the calm sea. The sky above wore a pale blue color, and the sea a greenish tint. The grey cliff shone white in the dazzling sunlight, and from the tops could be heard the tinkling bells of the cattle. Occasionally a dog's sharp bark, as he headed the cattle across the fields, would break the stillness of the atmosphere.

A crowd of fisher-folk had gathered along the shore to watch the barque set sail. Amongst them could be seen Violet's uncle and John Bye. It was rumored that Donovan was not aboard, and numerous were the guesses given for the reason of his not turning up. Where the man had gone they little knew. The man who had taken over command of the barque was a stranger, they heard.

"It all seems a mystery. This Donovan not

turning up, the suddenness of a man taking his place," said John, filling up his pipe with a roll of plug he had been cutting up. "The barmaid at the Queen's told me this morning that it was only last night when she saw Don. He, she said, left at dusk, and has never been seen or heard of since. Then there seems to be a stranger who has something to do with this strange behavior. A foreigner, she believed him to be, followed him, where to and what happened, God knows."

"Well, well," he exclaimed. He guessed Don had come to his end, but he kept quiet.

"What can ye make out of it, boss? It's rum, isn't it?" queried he.

The old sailor shook his head and gave an extra long pull at his pipe. "Simply, John," he said, "that some man has run the scoundrel to ground, and it is no business of yours or mine to interfere. Don may think discretion is the better part of valor."

"May be," said John.

"Of course, it's simple enough. Leave guessing alone, I tell ye," said Mr. Weldon, somewhat hastily.

"But, boss, the barmaid thinks," he said, lowering his voice, "the foreigner did away with him."

"Well," he said, regaining his self-composure, "suppose he did, the man only got his deserts."

We will then be rid of the greatest scoundrel in Yorkshire."

He turned around and pointed his telescope towards the fast disappearing barque.

"Boss," said John, "I can't quite agree with you. I think you wrong the man. Now, Mary," he lowered his voice when he mentioned his wife's name, "thinks worlds of the man, and she professes to be an excellent judge of the male sex."

Weldon burst into a hearty laugh. "John," he said, clapping him on his broad shoulders, "that's too good. Well, well, to be serious, I had admired your wife's taste," he looked the strong, handsome man in front of him up and down, "but I can't now; I can't quite after that, John."

John turned his head away as if annoyed.

"No offence, mate," said the old sailor. "I tell you, Donovan is cute—as cute as the devil, as deep as the ocean to fathom—underhanded and tricky. I knew his game all along! Making love to my niece. Thank God, Vi's a sensible woman and will have nothing to do with the scoundrel. She did not need my warning," he said, heartily; "it would never have come to anything, John."

"By the by, John," he said, "did the little barmaid tell you what clothes this foreigner wore?"

"She did. A long black overcoat; his face was well-hidden behind a large collar," she said.

"Gad," exclaimed the old sailor, "that's the man they took aboard—the new captain."

John emptied the ashes out of his pipe, carefully placed it back in the case, and thence in his pocket. "I will give it up, boss," he said, modestly; "maybe Donovan's not worth bothering one's brains about."

"That's speaking like yerself, John. If the devil has ahold of Donovan it is only what he deserves." He turned around. "See," he said, "how smoothly the barque moves. Carl will feel himself a man now. We will not know the boy when he returns."

"A wee bit bigger he should have been before going; another year or two older would have been better before letting him go to sea."

"Maybe so, John. But there's nothing like learning when one's young. I am not afraid, he knows how to take care of himself. He's grown considerably this last year. How proud his father would have been of him!"

"Wouldn't he, boss? Carl's going to be a strong man, a regular Price."

"Guess we shall not know him when he returns," laughed the old seaman.

"Sure, boss, the sea air is just the stuff for making quick growth."

A man in the distance was beckoning him to come. John noticed it. "I am wanted, boss," he said; "they are going a-fishing. All right, mates," he yelled to them, "I'll be with you in a minute. Call in, boss, and see my wife. Your niece was asking for ye this morning."

"I will, John. Good luck to ye, boy," he said, turning around.

The tide was almost out. A walk along the beach to Cliff House and back would give him a good appetite for dinner, he thought, as he walked along the sands and let the tiny rippling waves wash around his sea boots. The atmosphere seemed oppressive, for the breeze, little as it was, was sheltered by the headland above him, and the sun beat scorchingly on the golden sand. In the distance he heard the splash of the oars from the fishing boats as they rounded the rocky headland. Their sails were furled, for there was not sufficient breeze to fill them. The men were gaily singing. Their song echoed and re-echoed in and out of the craggy cliff. Sea-gulls, scared with the noise, left their caves and flew around shrieking loudly in the dizzy air. For a time the air was literally alive with sea-birds. Coming to the point where the path left the beach and began its ascent to the rocks above, a shining object lying on the sand arrested the old man's attention. Coming up to it he discovered that it

was a half-crown. Near it were several shilling pieces. The money had dropped out of Donovan's pocket as Captain Price was carrying the body across the sands.

"Good luck! Finding's keeping," said Weldon, as he gathered up the coins. He turned and looked out to sea. His practised eye swept beach and waves. But there was no other sign of the dead Donovan.

CHAPTER XVII.

TENDER and somewhat wistful thoughts occupied Carl's mind as he watched dear old England's shores disappear farther and farther away, while the good barque *Minnie*, with full canvas stretched, sailed on her way. He leaned over the rails in the forecastle head, the spray from the water with every lurch of the ship beating against his pale cheeks. The grey cliffs before him shone white in the dazzling sunlight. His eyes rested on the house on the cliff. Then he glanced along the esplanade to the house where his mother was staying. Tears filled his eyes as he thought of his suffering mother, her tender farewell.

He had heard that for some reason or other—a great disappointment to him—Looman was not aboard. A strange man had taken command of the barque, the bo'sun told him. "I caught a sight of the new captain," he was telling the crew, whose watch it was below, and who were lounging on their bunks peacefully smoking.

"What's he like?" asked several voices at once.

Carl overheard them and listened attentively to the description.

"A sensible-looking man, but too fond of the liquor. The mate told me—but keep it quiet, boys—that he was as drunk as a lord last night."

"My, that's a bad example to set, by gad."

"It makes no difference to us if he's drunk or not. He holds the buff and we haven't got it. Tell us what's the man like, bos'un?"

"Strictly speaking, mates, he's a man of medium height; extraordinary large hands and limbs; blue eyes that seem to laugh as they meet yours. A long beard covers his chin. Met him before, boy?"

They turned round to see whom he was addressing. Carl stood by the open door, gazing at the bo'sun. His eyes were open wide, and there was a sign of tears written in them.

"No, sir," he said with a tremble, "but your description of him reminds me of somebody I knew, somebody who is dead."

Some of the sailors burst out laughing.

"Maybe his ghost," said one, with a grin.

Carl turned away, his face crimson.

"Come, boy," cried the bo'sun, "they didn't mean to hurt your feelings."

Carl glanced at him; their eyes met. From then he felt he had a warm friend in the bo'sun.

"Long dead, sonnie?" he said kindly, stepping towards him so that his mates would not hear.

"Just a few months ago."

"Your father?"

"Yes, and he was a sea captain."

"Poor boy!"

Suddenly eight bells rang out. It was to relieve watch.

They went on deck. The first mate set them at various jobs—some to strap blocks and dead-eyes, short and long splice ropes. Carl liked this work, and soon learned the knack of it.

"He's a smart lad," remarked the mate, turning to the bo'sun, "for a greenhorn."

"Remarkable. Guess he's been to sea before. Have you, sonnie?" asked the mate, turning to him.

Carl looked up from his work. "Beg your pardon, sir."

"Have you been to sea before?" repeated the mate.

"No, sir. But I have lived by the sea all my life, and have often been on the sea in fishing snacks."

"Never strapped a block before, lad?" asked the bo'sun.

"No."

"Well, you are a smart boy. Greenhorns are generally stupid."/>

Carl smiled. "I am not what you can class as a greenhorn," he said, proudly. "My father was a sea captain; it is born in me."

"The deuce! I believe so," exclaimed the mate.

"Were you any relation of the captain who should have taken command?" asked the bo'sun. "I heard you were."

"No. He was a friend of father's. He sailed many voyages as first mate under him."

"Your father was drowned, they say."

"Yes, sir."

"Well, well, such is a sailor's life," said the bo'sun. "Many good men are lost so."

The mate was glancing at the sails. The wind had shifted a point. He immediately blew his whistle. "Haul the yards around!" he cried.

There was a scramble for the ropes, then one yard after the other was hauled around.

"You lived at Cliffgate, then?" asked Leo, casting his eyes over the sea.

"Yes, all my life."

"A very decent sort of a port."

"Glad you think so. I love the place."

"Never been anywhere else, perhaps?"

"No."

"Then you can be no judge."

A kinder light shone in Leo's eyes. He

thought of his fair native land, Italy, where warmth and sunshine reign, and ever blue skies; land of sweet-scented air from millions of flowers, of noble rivers and proud cities.

"Where did you come from, sir?" asked Carl.

"Italy."

"An Italian, then?"

"Yes, my mother and father are Italians. I was born twenty-three years ago in one of the prettiest seaports in Italy."

"I should love to go there."

"Perhaps some day I will take you, Carl," he said.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"THE devil! How the captain drinks. Every night he gets dead drunk. It's a shame! His wife seems to have led him to it. She must have been a bad woman!"

"What reason have you for that?" asked the second mate.

The first mate stood still. They were pacing the poop. "What reason, you ask? Very good ones. You know, Welsh, that my cabin joins his?"

"True."

"Well, last night I was kept awake as usual with his drunken bout. About two o'clock he was raging wildly. He had a slight attack of the d.t.'s. I went to him to see if I could calm him down. He was huddled up in the wicker chair, with some empty rum bottles on the floor by the side of him. On the table lay a photograph of a remarkably pretty woman. He opened his eyes and stared wildly as I approached. 'Curse that scoundrel!' he blurted out through his clenched teeth, throwing his arm about him. Then his head bowed. 'Violet, my wife, curse

you, you fiend! Curse the man, the devil, that robbed her from me. My wife, good God! Mad! mad!" he screamed. Then he lay quiet and fell asleep, and I left him."

"Poor fellow. He has had some big trouble that has led him to drink."

"Yes, I feel sorry for him, too. Something must be done, for he's not fit to have command of the vessel. If he does not alter his ways he will be a dead man before we reach port at the rate he's going."

"How's her course?" asked the second mate, turning round.

"North by east."

Eight bells suddenly struck out.

"Relieve wheel hands and look out."

The starboard watch came on deck.

"Can you smoke, lad?" asked Leo, as they entered the deck-house. He was filling his pipe up with cut twist.

Carl smiled. "Never tried."

"Will you try if I cut you some up, lad?"

"No, thank you, sir."

"Think you are not man enough yet? Perhaps you are too young."

Carl bit his lips. The temptation seemed hard to resist, but he remembered the promise he gave his mother, not to smoke until he turned twenty-one.

Leo watched him. "You know best, lad," he said. "Tell me of your home, Carl. Is your mother living?"

"Yes. Did you see that house on the cliff by itself?"

"Yes, to the north of the seaport."

"That is my home."

"A strange, out-of-the-way place I thought it was."

"Yes, it appears so, but it is a dear old house."

"Too dreary, I should say."

"Some people think so. I don't. You wouldn't, sir, I am sure, if you lived there. From the window you can see away out to sea, the cliffs and the sandy beach. I have sat for hours looking through my bedroom window late at night, with the full moon reflected upon the water in front, hearing the waves splash against the rocks below. I have a skiff of my own. On calm days I sail her around the headland."

Leo sat on his sea-chest attentively watching him. "Have you any brothers or sisters?"

"No."

"Poor lad!" he said, absently.

Carl glanced up.

"Why, sir, I was always happy."

"Only I was thinking how lonely it would be without any. There are seven of us. All boys. I am the fifth."

"Yes, I would have been happier if I had had a brother, but now it does not matter, my child days are over," said Carl sagely. "Are your father and mother alive, sir?" he continued.

"Yes, both. My youngest brother is about your age. Several of them are married and have children of their own." Leo smiled. He knew it would not be so long before his turn came. In far sunny Italy a sweet maiden was waiting for him.

Carl noticed the smile that lit up his handsome face and heightened its manly beauty.

Leo shook the ashes out of his pipe. "Come, Carl, we must turn in and get some sleep," he said; "the men are all snoring. It will soon be your watch on deck again."

CHAPTER XIX.

"WELL, doctor, how's the missis?"

"Doing first rate, Mr. Weldon. It's a boy, and such a fine baby."

The doctor had just left the sick-chamber and met Mr. Weldon on the front steps. Violet had given birth to a baby.

"That's good, doctor. Carl will be pleased to find he has a brother."

"It's a bonnie baby," said the doctor, springing into his carriage that waited by the door. He waved his hand to the old sailor as the coachman started the horse into a trot.

"This is good news, Mrs. Jones," said Mr. Weldon to the housekeeper, as he walked into the hall where the old woman was busy cleaning up.

"Laws! Mr. Weldon, how you startled me. Bless me, I can hardly keep still, I feel so excited. Violet is as proud as a queen. And no wonder. Such a bonnie baby! Poor darling Vi, she will feel much happier now she is a mother. Bless me, it makes the tears come into my old eyes to think on it. God has been good

to her to bless her with a child. She will never feel sad no more, now she has a child of her own to love and cherish. How proud Carl will be when he comes back and finds he has got a little brother. Well, bless me, I won't keep you, Mr. Weldon; I know you are dying to see the dear. Mrs. Bye is in the room with her."

"I don't know about going up, Mrs. Jones. You mustn't let too many women see her. I shall excite her too much. You women have such tongues."

With this parting shot the old sailor went upstairs and rapped quietly at the door.

"Come in," Mrs. Bye answered.

"Vi, Vi, my dear girl, how proud I am, and what a bonnie baby!"

Violet gave a faint smile. The little baby nestled at her breast.

Mrs. Bye went quietly out of the room and left her alone with her uncle.

"How much like you, Vi," the old sailor said, stooping down and kissing the babe.

"I think he has his father's nose, don't you, uncle?"

"Yes, love."

"Carl will be delighted when he knows he has a brother, I know."

"That he will, Vi. Almost worth cabling the news to him when they reach Yokohama."

Violet smiled again. She felt more peaceful and happy than she had for months. "You saw the ship sail, uncle?"

"Yes, love."

"You think it is a safe ship to sail by?"

"Rest assured, love, it is."

"Oh, I do not know what I should do if anything happened to Carl," she said in a far-away voice.

"Come, Vi. Nothing will. Carl is a good, great boy."

"Yes, uncle. They say that angels watch over the poor sailors. Then poor father was lost!" She always called her husband father now. She gazed in a far-away look out of the window as she spoke. Peacefully the wide ocean lay before them. The window was thrown open and the balmy sea breeze slightly moved the curtains to and fro.

"Tell me, uncle," she said, suddenly, "have you seen anything of Donovan? It seems strange he never sailed. Carl will miss him." It was always Carl she was thinking of.

The old sailor bit his lip. "No, Vi," he said. "But do not let it bother you, dear. God's ways are not our ways. Who knows but it may be far better for Carl that Donovan did not go."

"Yes, uncle, I am glad. I hope never to see

that man again. I was only thinking of Carl. Did you hear who the captain is, uncle?"

"No, love."

"I hope he will be kind to Carl."

"Who could not help being kind to the boy? Carl is a favorite with everybody."

The baby moved. She hugged him closer to her breast, kissing his tiny lips.

Mrs. Bye presently entered. "Violet, dear, I have brought you some beef tea. Try and take it." She placed the tray on a table beside the bed.

The old sailor turned. Good-bye, darling. I will see you to-morrow." He stooped and kissed her before leaving.

The old housekeeper had done tidying the hall and was washing the steps outside. "Well, Mr. Weldon," she said, "isn't he a sweet baby?"

"Very! How well Violet has come through it. She's just like her mother."

The sun was setting. The sea was lit up from the reflection into golden and red. Around the headland a dozen fishing smacks were making for the harbor. A group of fishermen stood on the beach waiting for their return. Kettiwigs and heron gulls were shrieking and darting in and out of the water. A band was playing on the esplanade, and some visitors were to be seen, some lounging in the seats that were dotted here

and there along the beach. Children were romping in the gardens, playing and laughing. It was the seaside season, and the town was on the way to becoming a popular summer resort. The drowsy little fishing port for three months in the year was turned into joy and laughter. A small pleasure steamer took visitors who wished for a sail around the coast. A pier was being built, which they expected to have completed in a few weeks. Mr. Weldon was one of the new councillors. He felt proud of the seaport as he stood on the front steps and watched the happy people and noted the great improvements that had sprung up all around.

"There will be no finer seaside resort in England soon," he said, turning to the housekeeper.

"Who would have thought that such a quiet place could have woke up so?" she said.

He glanced towards the house on the cliff. Already a row of buildings was springing up near to the house.

Her eyes followed his.

"We'll have close neighbors ere long," she said, nodding her head towards the house.

"By gad, you will. It has been a busy year with the builders. They are all to be boarding-houses. A good investment, too."

The sun sank. The lights from the gas lamps along the esplanade suddenly lit up all

THE HOUSE ON THE CLIFF. 217

along the avenue. In the distance the ever-revolving light of the lighthouse shone on every side. The clock from the old church struck seven. The fishing-smacks returned; the sailors' voices could be heard shouting as they drew the boats up the beach. Mr. Weldon smiled and went down the beach to them. The old housekeeper rose from the kneeling position she was in, took up her belongings, and went indoors.

CHAPTER XX.

SUDDENLY the bell struck out. The port watch was awakened from their slumber by one of the starboard men.

"Out you get; out you get!" he shouted.

"Gad, how it blows!" exclaimed one of them, rubbing the sleep from his eyes.

"You bet. It's a gale. We have furled the top-gallant sails. Reckon you people will be busy. Glad it's our watch below."

The ship gave a sudden lurch to port; a wave rose and came bounding against the deck-house door.

"My, that's great!" exclaimed Carl.

"Yes, but ye'll not think so when ye go on deck," said the sailor, slamming the door behind him as he went out.

Eight bells rang out. There was a rush for the door. The starboard watch entered, and the port went on deck. Dark was the night, an inky darkness. The wind howled and shrieked, the masts cracked and groaned, the ship rolled and pitched—shook fore and aft as the waves thundered again and again on deck.

Carl made for the poop to keep watch. The bo'sun relieved the man at the wheel. Up and down the first mate paced. With the exception of the man on the lookout on the forecastle head, the crew made themselves as comfortable as they could under the forecastle head awaiting any orders that might be given. They had not long to wait, for soon the mate cried, "Furl the royal foresail!" It was the first time Carl had been up aloft in a storm; still he felt it quite natural to be up there, giving a hand to drag the sail up under his body, as if on deck. Surely he was a born sailor. He was disappointed not to find the captain at the poop. He had never seen him, and longed to know what he was like who had taken Donovan's place. The captain should be here; it is his place, he thought, to be on the poop when in such a storm.

He whispered to the bo'sun, after the sail was furled: "Have you seen anything of the captain?"

"No, he's drunk!" He pointed to the skylight, below which he knew was the captain's quarters.

Carl staggered back a pace. "Drunk!" he exclaimed. "What a shame!"

"Yes, it's too bad."

The mate came up to them and looked at the compass. Carl walked away.

The storm increased. The mate's pipe again rang out, "Furl the fore and main topsail!"

Again the men left their resting-place and scrambled up the mast. Large waves fell on the deck, so that the ship was literally swept fore and aft with the angry water.

"All hands on deck!" the mate suddenly cried.

Carl made for the deck-house and gave the alarm. A ringing shout sounded from the port-watch as they fastened the gaskets safely around the fore-topsail. One by one the starboard watch came bounding on deck.

"Up aloft, you men!" shouted the mate, "and furl the main topsail."

"Aye, aye," they responded, as they bounded up the rigging.

"Mind the bunt-lines and clew-lines!" shouted the second mate.

"Aye, aye!"

"Furl the mizzen royal, you port watch!" the mate cried.

The excitement now was great. Above the roar of the waves and the never-ending howling wind could be heard the seamen's voices chanting as they took in the sails.

Carl crept up to the poop. He determined, with a boy's curiosity, to go down to the captain's quarters and see the man. Why drunk? Should he not be on deck giving orders? Is he

not responsible for the safety of the ship and the crew? He knew he was. All hands were doing their best, and he, the captain, who should have been the first to have attended to their safety, who held command—was drunk, heedless of their peril! He softly crept down the hatchway into the captain's quarters. With a glance he saw the man huddled up in the wicker chair with his head on his breast. Empty and half-empty bottles of rum rolled to and fro with every lurch of the vessel along the floor of the cabin.

A sudden terror passed over Carl. He turned deathly white and shook all over. "Father! father!" he screamed, wildly.

The captain half opened his dazed eyes and stared stupidly before him. His eyes rolled wildly, and he partly rose. "Carl, my son, my son!" he shouted, huskily. He tried to walk but staggered and fell heavily on the deck in a fit.

Carl turned and ran wildly up the hatchway on to the upper deck. He seized the first mate by the coat. "Father—" he panted, "the captain's in a fit. Come, come quickly."

The first mate stared in amazement at him. The boy's eyes looked aflame. He was trembling all over. The mate turned to the second mate, who stood close by. "Take command, Welsh," he said, "I'll go. Come," he said to a sailor

who had just belayed the bunt-line, "you may be wanted to give a hand."

They followed Carl aft to the cabin, where lay the captain raving. They picked him up and laid him in his bunk. He raved and cursed, desperately fighting the air, while the mate and the sailor held him down. Suddenly he became quiet. The mate rose. "Come, we will go on deck. Boy, you may stay with him. Come for us if you need any help."

"Father, father, speak to me!" piteously cried Carl.

The captain opened his eyes and looked wonderingly before him. "Lad," he said, in a thick, choking voice, "how came you here?"

"Father, we thought you were dead—drowned!"

The captain's memory slowly came back to him. "Dead—drowned! Oh, yes; Donovan thought he had murdered me!" He gave a harsh laugh.

"Donovan!" cried Carl.

The captain sat up for a moment and then fell back, breathing heavily.

"Come closer to me, Carl," he whispered, huskily. The boy knelt down by him and held his father's burning hand. "He flung me overboard, Carl. Then, oh God; oh, God!"

He stopped speaking and breathed heavily.

"The crew of a Yankee ship saved me from drowning. When I got well I hastened home to slay my would-be murderer. I found him on the cliff by the house, and we struggled, and he fell headlong over the cliff."

The perspiration stood like beads on his forehead as he spoke. A choking sensation seized him, which he desperately tried to fight away.

Carl flung his arms around his father's neck.

"Oh, father! why didn't you come home?"

He tried to speak, but could not say a word. "Fetch—fetch me a drink, Carl," he said faintly. The boy ran and brought him some gin. He drank it eagerly and breathed a little easier. "Because, my son, I had none; he married your mother—my wife!"

"Father!" Carl said, indignantly, "never!"

The captain groaned.

"Oh, forgive me, father, but it made me mad to hear you say that. Dear mother thought you were drowned, and she has been so ill over it—so ill. She loved you dearly. She never would have married Donovan, even if you had been dead for years—never, never, father!"

"Good God!" he said, huskily, "and I have wronged her so. My poor, noble wife."

A fit of coughing seized him. When he recovered it left him deathly white. Carl bent

closer to him. "Dear, noble wife, she thought I was dead."

There was a long silence.

The sick man partly sat up. "Carl, kiss me," he said, faintly. "Do not tell her you have seen me, it will only grieve her. My poor wife, take care of her, Carl."

He fell heavily backwards.

"Father, father!" the boy sobbed, twining his arms around the prostrate form.

The captain's eyes were glazing, his face was drawn and white, and a shudder shook his massive frame—then he lay still. Captain Price was dead.

